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AL FAJR

JERUSALEM

PALESTINIAN WEEKLY

(USPS 686-630)

DECEMBER 21, 1984
VOL.V,NO.242

POSTMASTER
Send address changes to:
Al-Fajr
2025 I Street N.W.
Washington, D.C.
20006

West Bank Residents Challenge Israeli Road Grid Plans

As more information becomes available opposition is building to Israeli Road Plan Number 50, which has been called "the most serious recent development towards *de facto* annexation of the occupied West Bank."

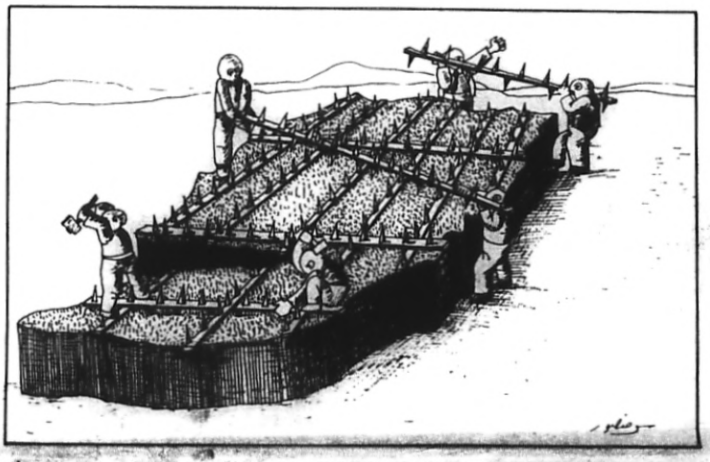
An ad hoc committee of West Bank lawyers, agro-economists and political figures released details December 19 of a 555-kilometre Israeli road system for the occupied West Bank which they maintian will seriously harm the local population. They are also questioning the legality of the plan under international law.

The plan widens existing roads, lays new roads, and redirects the north-south transportation axis to an east-west flow to provide rapid transit between Israel and the West Bank. The system would skirt rather than serve the 20 major Palestinian towns and cities, pass through a number of refugee camps, obliterate cultivated agricultural land, and destroy water systems, private projects, houses, schools and factories. A detailed version of the precise road paths is still unavailable. The largest of the four road types proposed will be 120 metres in actual road width, with a 150-metre "setback" area on either side where no development of any kind would be permitted. Total land loss is estimated to be 78,400 dunums of private land.

The group held a press conference in East Jerusalem to publicise results of a study which assesses damages from a 20-kilometre sample section of the massive plan.

The report estimates that the loss to Palestinian farmers and residents along this small stretch alone would be US$27 million in agriculture, housing, industry, and water resources.

The Israeli plan was drawn up by military occupation officers without the participation of any Palestinian community affected by the road changes. The Likud government began planning the grid four years ago and military authorities published the final proposal in rough map form in February of this year. Before the objections period expired in April, Palestinian residents had filed thousands of complaints through law offices in the Ramallah and Nablus area. All objections must be heard before the Israeli government can ratify the plan.



The committee is seeking local and international pressure to request the World Court in the Hague for an advisory opinion on the legality of the Israeli plan for the occupied territories. The request must be made by a two-thirds vote of United Nations General Assembly or nine votes in the Security Council, in addition to a nod from permanent members. Pending the International Court of Justice's advisory opnion, the local committee will pursue a preliminary "desist" order against Israel from the court.

The Israeli High Court earlier heard a challenge to the legality of the plan and pronounced it "legal" because it benefited the "local population." The committee maintains that the only population whose interests are served by Road Plan Number 50 are Israeli settlers. And in contrast to an earlier court hearing on the same plan, "security" needs were not raised by the military before the bench, a fact

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Aboud, Rantis, Al-Luban Villagers Sit-in on Confiscated Land

Palestinian villagers from Aboud, Rantis and al-Lubban, all west of Ramallah, held a sit-in on their fields December 16 to protest the Israeli decision to confiscate large areas of their land. The Israelis last week notified the *mukhtar* of the three villages that the Israeli custodian of absentee property had declared more than 1380 cultivated dunums "state land."

More than 5,000 men, women and children from the three villages gathered on their land on Sunday morning, expressing their determination to fight the confiscation order. At the same time a delegation of landowners met with Israeli officials and conveyed to them the villagers' opposition to the decision to confiscate their land.

Residents of the three villages told *Al Fajr* that the area targeted is more than 4000 dunums — not only the 1380 dunums as claimed. They asserted that the rough description given by Israeli officers who conveyed the confiscation order suggested that more than 4000 dunums are at stake.

Lawyer Musa Shukri, one of a five-member Land Defence Committee from the Arab Lawyers League in charge of the case, said they sent a letter to the Israeli military governorate legal advisor December 19. The letter requested clear delineation of the area in question so villagers could know which land is affected.

Most of the grabbedland is cultivated with different kinds of grain and some olive and fruit trees. Villagers say the land was not registered in their names because the survey and registration initiated by the Jordanian government in the 1960's was disrupted by Israel's occupation of the West Bank in 1967. But they said that the military government's finance department records, dating before 1967, show they have been paying taxes on the land for generations. Landowners are currently trying to obtain tax records to submit an objection to the Israeli Military Objections Committee.

Lawyers say that Israeli authorities confiscated a large area of land from the village of Aboud last year to build a road. The area was initially declared "state land" but landowners proved they were cultivating the land and forced the authorities to cancel the confiscation order. The Israelis later resorted to confiscating the land for "public purposes."

In a related story, the Israeli military authorities notified landowners from Beit Fajjar village near Bethlehem last week that 700 dunums planted with vineyards were slated for confiscation. The Israelis had previously surveyed and marked off the targeted land.

Issawiyeh Land Grabbed For Hadassah Hospital

Israeli workers employed by the Hadassah hospital on Mount Scopus in East Jerusalem began foresting a 25-dunum plot last week which belongs to residents of Issawiyeh village, on the eastern borders of Jerusalem. The Palestinian landowners who have land deeds to prove ownership say they are prepared to take the issue to court if necessary.

The Issawiyeh landowners discovered that Israeli workers had planted seedlings on their land early this month. When they asked Israeli hospital officials about the purpose of the work they were told the land was government property and the hospital was renting it from the government. Village residents later learned that the Israelis are

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Italian inspectors examining the corpse of Ismael Darwish.

PLO Blames Mossad for Darwish Assassination

The PLO office in Rome accused Israeli agents of assassinating a high-ranking Palestinian officer in the Italian capital December 14. Ismael Darwish, 33, a captain in the Fateh Movement, was shot dead by two gunmen while on his way to a meeting in central Rome. Italian police sources said the two gunmen using silencers fired several shots at Darwish at close range and then fled on a motorcycle. Police *identified the dead man as a* Moroccan businessman named Mohammed Abd al-Rahman Kamal.

In a statement issued after the incident, the PLO office in Rome commented, "This is not the first time that Israeli secret agents commit their crimes in the city." The Israeli secret service, Mossad, was blamed for the assassination of PLO Executive Committee member Majed Abu Sharar in Rome in 1981. The Israeli Mossad has been implicated in a number of assassinations of Palestinians in various European capitals in the past.

The PLO leadership in Tunis issued a statement December 15 mourning Darwish as "an outstanding Palestinian fighter, who was killed by Mossad agents." Darwish, brother of Monte Carlo newsbroadcaster Nabil Darwish, was born in Jerusalem in 1951. His family is originally from the village of al-Walajeh in the Bethlehem district. He joined Fateh in 1968 at the age of 17 and participated in all the major battles in which the Palestinian revolution was involved. The PLO statement said that Darwish showed exceptional courage, particularly during the battle of Beirut in 1982. He was the father of two children.

Many Palestinian institutions and figures published mourning notices in the local press.

New PLO Exec-Comm. Meets To Distribute Chairs

The PLO's newly-elected executive committee met for the first time in Tunis December 13 to allocate departmental positions to executive committee members and to elect 15 new members to the PLO central council.

Reliable sources from Tunisia reported that the executive committee endorsed practical procedures for reforming, maintaining and developing the PLO institutions in accordance with the resolutions of the Amman PNC session.

Positions for PLO executive committee members were distributed as follows:

* Yasir Arafat: Chairman, Executive Committee and chairman, military committee.

* Jamal Surani: Secretary;

* Farouq Kaddoumi; Head, political department;

* Fahd Qawasmeh: Head, occupied land affairs department;

* Mohammad Milhem: Head, education department;

* Abdel Rahim Ahmad: Head, popular organizations and social affairs department;

* Jaweed al-Ghussein: Head, Palestinian National Fund;

Bishop Elia Khoury, Abdel Razaq Mahmoud Abbas and Mohammed Abbas were not give any posts.

Seven consultative committees for the PNC were also formed and chairmen elected: Dr. Nabil Sha'ath, chairman, social reforms committee; Saleh Barghouti, chairman, fact-finding committee; Qusay Abableh, chairman, accounting and auditing committee; Khaled Hassan, chairman, parliamentary affairs and foreign affairs committee; Hamed Abu Sitteh, chairman, occupied territories affairs committee; Hanna Nasr, chairman, information committee; Ahmad Sidqi Dajani, chairman, European affairs committee.

New PLO central council members are: Abdel Aziz Saqr, Fa'eq Warad, Abdel Aziz Haj Ahmad, Refa'at Odeh, Ibrahim Abu Ayash, Da'oud al-Zir, Shafiq al-Hout, Samir al-Khatib, Samira Abu Ghazaleh, Hani Kaddoumi, Ibrahim Ayad, Yasin Sharif, Sabri Jiryis, Isma'il Isma'il, and Salwa Abu Khadra.

Palestinian sources reported that an unknown number of seats in the central council and on committees were held for Palestinian organisatons which did not attend the PNC session in Amman.

Israelis Wage War Against S. Lebanon

In a major military move reminiscent of the Israeli blockade and storming of Beirut in 1982, Israeli occupation forces used more than 70 tanks and mobilized large units of soldiers December 13 to encircle eight south Lebanese villages in the Tyre area. The Israeli forces later entered the villages and, according to local Lebanese sources, shot indiscriminately into the crowds, who gathered to resist the storming. Four people were killed including a 27-year-old woman shot in the head and a 14-year-old girl who was shot in the mouth, according to a Jordan TV report, for shouting at Israeli soldiers. Several villagers including three women were wounded. Sounds of machine gun fire and heavy artillery were heard throughout the Tyre area.

The Israeli occupation forces detained 30 villagers on suspicion of carrying out resistance attacks on the Israelis and the South Lebanon army which they train and support. A UNIFIL source reported that Israeli soldiers prevented the peace-keeping forces from entering the villages to treat the wounded. The source said all communication to the eight villages was cut and Telex and phone lines connecting UNIFIL headquarters to Naqoura and to their offices in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem were also disrupted.

In another move this week Israeli forces stormed the Shi'ite village of Sarafand and a nearby Palestinian refugee camp December 18 and arrested 21 villagers. The raid was vehemently denounced in the Lebanese press and by local Palestinians. It was described by Israeli military sources as "a continuation of Israeli army policy to detain those engaged in hostile activity against Israeli forces." Women and children reportedly resisted the arrest of their relatives but to no avail.

The occupation soldiers were reported to be put on full alert following the two operations, fearing retaliation from resistance forces. Israeli warplanes were seen buzzing the area and Israeli patrol units were moving quickly through the Tyre area.

In an incident reported by media sources in south Lebanon indicating the panicky mood of Israeli forces, an Israeli patrol boat fired at and sank a Lebanese fishing vessel off the coast of Tyre. There was no report on the occupants.

Meanwhile, Lebanese and Israeli officers were to meet once again in Naqoura December 20 to discuss Israeli troop withdrawal from south Lebanon. This would be the twelfth and last session of negotiations between the two sides before the Christmas recess.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the general feeling in Israeli political circles is that this session may be the last unless US presidential envoy Richard Murphy can come up with new ideas on how the withdrawal will implemented. Murphy is still shuttling between Beirut, Damascus, Amman, Jedda, Cairo and Tel Aviv in pursuit of a breakthrough in the deadlocked negotiations.

Fighting in Shouf and Barouk As PSP Stands Against Army

Bitter disagreement over the Lebanese government's security plan continued to fuel the civil strife in Lebanon with neither the weak Lebanese cabinet nor the powerful Syrian government able to control the warfare.

Fighting between militias belonging to the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP) and the Lebanese army spilled over this week to the Shouf mountains. Fighting in the Barouk mountain regimes also continued as militias of the predominantly Druse PSP — led by Walid Jumblatt, now Lebanese minister of public works — refuse to allow the regular Lebanese army to mobilise along the coastal highway connecting Beirut with the Israeli-occupied areas south of the Awali River. Lebanese police sources reported that one soldier was killed and two wounded near the mountain town of Souk al-Gharb.

Israeli sources maintained that the fighting spread to the Shouf mountains in response to Israeli reports of a unilateral withdrawal.

Lebanese government sources reported that a high-level Syrian military delegation is expected to arrive in Beirut to put final touches to the security plan.

The Lebanese cabinet met December 19 without Jumblatt. Lebanese reports said that the cabinet approved a third version of the security plan.

Amnesty International Criticises Israel

In its annual report on world human rights conditions, published November 2, Amnesty International (AI) criticised "Israeli violations of International Law which result from placing Palestinian residents under town arrest in the occupied territories without bringing them to trial." AI said that town arrestees in the Israeli occupied West Bank and Gaza have been deprived of the right to defend themselves before courts. AI rejected Israeli claims that Article 78 of the Fourth Geneva Convention gives the Israeli authorities the right to put people under town arrest for security reasons. The organisation said it was concerned about the misuse of this article to suppress people's right to freedom of expression. The report explained that town arrestees must be informed of the reasons for their town arrest. The report stipulated that the appeals (objections) system which the military authorities provide for town arrestees does not give them a fair opportunity to defend themselves. This is usually because people are not given clear reasons for their town arrests, not even after they appeal their restriction before the Israeli Military Objections Committee (which is the only appeal body for military orders), the report said. The report also pointed out that without this specific information it would be impossible for town arrestees to contest the order. Very few people have been released from town arrest as a result of a recommendation from the Military Objections Committee or from further appeal to the Israeli High Court. Amnesty International also reported that they know of some cases where the military authorities ignored the recommendation of the Military Objections Committee.

The AI report, which is distributed worldwide, said that at present there are 42 cases of town arrest which have been reported to the international human rights organisation. In 1980, it reported the number of town arrestees was 148.

In its monthly newsletter, which was published in mid-November, AI publicised the cases of Najah University lecturer Sami Kilani, from Ya'abad in the Jenin district, whose town arrest was renewed this month for the third year, Ghassan Jarrar, a Bir Zeit Univesity student from Jenin, and Radwan Abu Ayyash, a Ramallah journalist and member of the administrative committee of the Arab Journalists Association. (Translation: Al-Talia'a, December 20, 1984)

Teachers' Federation Celebrates 4th Annual Day

One of the honoured teachers receiving medal for excellent performance/AO photo

Palestinian teachers in the occupied territories celebrated the annual Teachers Day December 14 with a popular meeting at al-Nuzha el-Hakawati Theatre in Jerusalem. Unlike in previous years, Israeli authorities did not try to stop the meeting.

More than 300 people, mostly teachers from various parts of the West Bank, participated in the meeting which started at 9:30 am with a moment of silence in memory of Palestinian martyrs who died while struggling for Palestinian rights. This was followed by speakers representing various educational and national institutions who spoke about problems of education in the West Bank and about the welfare of Palestinian teachers, especially those who work in government schools.

"Various speakers — Issa al-Azzeh, from the Union of UNRWA Schoolteachers, Jamal Bannoura from the General Committee of Government School Teachers in the West Bank, Atallah Abu Ghattas, on behalf of the honoured teachers, and Dr. Thabet Thabet, representing the Federation of Professional Unions — praised the role that Palestinian teachers play in Palestinian life under Israeli occupation. All speakers agreed that the conditions of Palestinian teachers and the education sector as a whole have seriously deteriorated under the Israeli authorities. Speakers pointed out that in addition to the lack of curriculum development, schools lack basic facilities such as libraries, laboratories and playgrounds. Some speakers also mentioned the economic hardships which government school teachers live under, where average salaries are about JD90 (US$225).

"At the end of the celebration, 120 teachers were honoured by the organisers of the celebration for outstanding work; each teacher was given shields made of olive wood. There were regional Teachers Day celebrations in Beit Sahour, Bethlehem district, and in Nablus." (Translation : Al-Talia'a, December 20, 1984)

Jordan Bans Imports of Gaza Citrus

Jordanian authorities officially notified Gaza citrus merchants this week that they can no longer sell their produce in Jordan, on the pretext that Jordanians need to sell their own crops. The Federation of Citrus Producers in the Gaza Strip immediately sent a letter to the Jordanian minister of agriculture December 17 asking him to lift the restrictions.

The head of the federation, Hashim Atta Shawwa, told *Al Fajr* that the letter explained the difficult conditions Palestinian farmers live under in the Gaza Strip; and requested the Jordanians to assist them in their economic hardship. "We asked the Jordanian minister to maintain the same policy and allow us to market in Jordan," he said. Until last year, Jordanian markets sold about 10 percent of the Gaza Strip's citrus crop. Unaffected is the 50 percent of the local crop which is exported through Jordan to Arab countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Shawwa also criticised the Jordanian authorities' demand that farmers use Arab-manufactured boxes to export citrus. He explained that the sole Arab box factory does not manufacture enough to meet the market's demand. He also said they are obliged to use boxes imported from Yugoslavia because they have an agreement with Yugoslavia to trade the wood for citrus. Eastern Europe, particularly Yugoslavia, imports between 25 and 40 percent of the Strip's citrus.

Citrus farmers in the Gaza Strip face multiple problems which have been forcing a decline in production. The major problem is that Israel and the Arab states impose limitations on exports. Farmers say the Israeli authorities not only bar them from marketing in Israel; they also prohibit them from seeking new and higher-priced markets in Western Europe to prevent competition with Israeli exports. Arab countries have also been restricting exports on the pretext that they want to promote their crops.

Citrus production in the Gaza Strip, considered the backbone of Gaza's economy, has been on the decline for the past few years. Statistics issued by the Federation of Citrus Producers put the estimated output this year at 125,000 tons, about 21,000 tons less than last year. Shawwa said the decline in citrus production resulted from problems in marketing and rapid cost increases for orchard maintenance. He also pointed out that farmers are overburdened by high taxes. Palestinian farmers have been uprooting or simply abandoning their citrus groves because of the heavy cost of maintaining them. The latest records put citrus farmland in the Strip at about 50,000 dunums, one-third less than in previous years.

Shawwa complained about lack of support from the Joint PLO—Jordanian Committee at a time when Palestinian farmers in the Strip are abandoning their farms. He said that last year, the Joint Committee allocated a little over JD one million to compensate more than 10,000 farmers for their losses. This amount was way below what farmers needed to offset increasing losses in citrus production, he said.

Halhoul Council Retracts Milhem's Demotion

The Halhoul municipal council retracted its two-week-old decision to demote elected mayor Mohammed Milhem to the status of a regular council member. Milhem was deported in 1980 by Israeli authorities as a political reprisal for his strong nationalist position.

Halhoul residents vehemently protested the local council's November 27 decision and Jordanian and PLO officials took action to freeze the municipality's bank account in Amman. The council had never explained the reasons behind withdrawing Milhem's mayorship, but an Israel TV report said the demotion was based on allegations of misappropriation of funds.

Seven council members who had voted against Milhem signed a letter December 6 retracting their decision and declaring that Milhem is still considered the legitimate elected mayor.

Council members and Halhoul dignitaries paid a visit to the Milhem home December 11 and formally apologised to the only member of the immediate family remaining in the West Bank, Milhem's daughter Lima, and to the Milhem clan.

Lima Milhem told *Al Fajr* that the delegation, headed by acting mayor Hijazi Madia, apologised for the problems and informed the Milhems that the council has retracted the decision. The council members asked that the *sulha*, the traditional Arab reconciliation process, and the council's decision not be publicised for fear of angering Israeli military authorities. According to Lima Milhem their request was denied. "We want to clear my father's name from any shred of accusation," she explained.

Hijazi Madia confirmed the fact that the council retracted its decision. Halhoul sources said Israeli authorities pressured council members to keep the decision. One source claimed military authorities offered to fund the rest of the construction for Halhoul's central fruit and vegetable market.

Mohammad Milhem was elected as a member of the PLO's executive committee during the 17th PNC session held in Amman. He has been appointed chairman of the PLO's education committee and member of the committee on occupied land affairs.

Israelis Approve New Hospital for Hebron

After a four-year delay, Israeli authorities approved December 16 the construction of a new 300-bed hospital in Hebron. Sources from "the Patient Friends Society" who applied for the license and furnished all detailed health and construction studies, linked the approval to public Israeli declarations about improving the standard of living in the West Bank. The only hospital serving Hebron district's 80,000 residents is the small government Princess Alia hospital built by Jordan before 1967. The hospital has outdated equipment and can only admit 100 patients.

Mahmoud Tamimi, deputy chairman of the Patients Friends Society, said that the Israeli decision was preceded by a number of meetings between the Hebron group and a group of Arab and Jewish American businessmen.

On December 16 the Patient Friends Society administrative members met with the Hebron military governor, the general administrative governor, the liaison officer of West Bank societies, the social affairs liaison officer, and the health officer at the military governorate to receive a positive answer for their four-year-old application to construct a new hospital. Those present at the meeting agreed to form a joint committee to study the medical and technical aspects involved in establishing a well-equipped hospital with an initial 200 beds. Another 100 beds are to be added in the second phase.

In addition to the four main departments (internal medicine, general surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, and pedriatrics), the hospital will include specialised surgery, and departments for orthopedics, neurology, cardiovascular diseases, cardiology, a burn unit, and intensive care units for children and adults.

The PFS administrative members will contact international consulting companies to submit written bids for construction. They also plan to send

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Herut Demo. In Iksal Sparks Anti-Fascist Rally

Over 8,000 Palestinians, several hundred progressive Jews and some Knesset members gathered in Iksal village south of Nazareth December 18 to prevent the Israeli Herut Party Youth Movement and its supporters from demonstrating against native son and Knesset member Abdel Wahab Darawsheh (Labour) for his attempt last month to go to Amman to address members of the Palestine National Council (PNC).

The Herut demonstrators received permission to stage the protest from Israeli Minister of Police Haim Bar-Lev, a decision which angered Palestinian and Israeli democratic forces. Iksal village observed a general strike in protest against the scheduled march. All schools, shops and public institutions were closed.

The village was tense at noon when 500 police armed with tear gas and clubs arrived and took positions around the village entrances. Palestinian protesters erected a series of roadblocks inside the village and congregated along the streets at the village entrances to wait for Herut supporters to arrive. "Fascism will not pass," was one slogan written on placards and walls and shouted by angry demonstrators. Demonstrators expressed Palestinjan national sentiments and support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. Iksal residents spoke through loudspeakers and reported telegrammes they received from Palestinian and Jewish democratic forces. Around 1:00 pm, Haim Hadad, commander of the northern district, arrived and ordered the residents to disperse and go home. Despite the threat of force, residents refused to leave but did agree not to speak over the loudspeakers.

Around this time more than 50 Herut supporters, including MKs Me'ir Cohen and Michael Eitan and the Likud candidate for the Upper Nazareth municipality, Jack Lardu, arrived and stood 400 metres away from the village entrance, shouting anti-Arab slogans. They asked police for permission to enter to meet Darawsheh. They said they wanted to give him a one-way visa to Jordan and a copy of the Palestinian National Charter.

At 4:30 pm Saleh Yahya Darawsheh, chairman of Iksal village council, announced the end of the strike and said the Herut demonstration had failed.

"It is a day of victory for all Arab and Jewish democratic forces," said Abdel Wahab Darawsheh. "We succeeded in defeating fascist supporters who attempted to break into our villge."

MK Meir Vilner, secretary general of the Israeli Communist Party, said, "We scored a victory in this battle against fascism but the battle is not over yet." Representatives of Peace Now, Mapam, Ratz and some Labour Party activists also attended the demonstration and delivered similar statements.

Lecture on Islam at Tantour

A lecture on Islamic parties and their programmes was delivered at the Centre for Ecumenical Studies at Tantour December 13 as part of Tantour's weekly cultural programme.

Foreign teachers from local universities, outside visitors and students attended a three-hour discussion on Islamic fundamentalists in the occupied territories and in the rest of the Arab and Islamic world.

Said al-Ghazali, a reporter with *Al Fajr* English Weekly who has written several journalistic pieces on local Islamic groups, gave the lecture. Several topics such as the issue of separating state from religion, and the rise of fundamentalism in Islam, Christianity and Judaism were discussed.

Don Nichol, chairman of the Centre for Ecumenical studies at Tantour, who participated in the discussion, stressed the need for co-existence among all religions. He said that the Tantour centre would invite other discussions to strengthen cultural links between the centre and the Palestinian population.

The Ecumenical Centre of Tantour was set up by the Vatican after Vatican II resolutions which called for closer ties among the various Christian denominations as well as between members of the three monotheistic religions.

During the past few years the centre has been active in sponsoring lectures and symposiums dealing with many of these problems.

AFTER 18-MONTH BAN:

Hakawati Takes 'ALI' To Jericho

Israeli military authorities permitted a one-time only performance of the Palestinian play "Ali the Galilean," after banning the play for 18 months in the West Bank. The play, by the Jerusalem-based el-Hakawati theatre troupe, was performed before a packed cinema house in Jericho.

Troupe members told *Al Fajr* that the one-time permit was a result of persistent pressures on military authorities through local media and lawyers. A French TV crew accompanied the theatre troupe to Jericho and filmed the event for a show on Palestinian culture. Troupe members acknowledged that the presence of the foreign journalists may have facilitated the permit.

El-Hakawati had submitted the text of the play to the military authorities in June 1983 but as of December 13 had still received no reply.

Actor Radi Shehadeh said: "After we submitted the text we supplied the military authorities with a video tape of the play and a schedule of performances because they insisted on seeing the play before they would consider giving permission — all with no results."

Shehadeh said that when all attempts failed the troupe decided to confront the *de facto* ban by scheduling a West Bank performance.

Lawyers for the troupe were also in continuous contact with the military authorities, pushing them to reply to the permit application. The permission was finally given verbally by the legal advisor to the military governor in Beit El and relayed to the theatre troup's lawyer.

The Jericho military governor had earlier warned el-Hakawati that he would not allow the performance unless permission was received from Israeli military government headquarters.

The eight-year-old el-Hakawati which has performed before local, Israeli, European and African audiences, has not received written permission to stage the play in any other part of the West Bank. Another el-Hakawati play, *The 1001 nights of a Stone-Thrower*, was submitted to military authorities in September 1982 and has yet to receive a permit.

UNFIL Soldiers Detained In Metullah

The Israeli army briefly detained an officer and a soldier from the Finnish contingent of the United Nations Interim Force in South Lebanon (UNIFIL) December 16 at the Metullah crossing point between Israel and Lebanon, on the pretext that they were carrying explosives to Israel.

The two military men were on their way to Tiberias to organise sports matches when they were arrested at the border checkpoint. The Hebrew *Ma'ariv* daily, which reported the incident December 17, said that TNT was discovered under the back seat of their jeep on routine search. The officer denied any knowledge of the presence of the explosives in his car. He explained that he signed out the car without searching or checking it.

UNIFIL spokesperson Timor Goksel said the two men were held several hours, and then released after it became clear to the Israelis the men had no prior knowledge that explosives were in the car. (Translation: Al Quds, December 19, 1984)

Mass Arrests of Arab Workers

Scores of Arab labourers were arbitrarily arrested December 17 in Tel Aviv by Israeli police following a grenade attack on a Tel Aviv intra-city bus. The bomb attack wounded four Israelis and caused severe damage to the bus. The Hebrew radio broadcast said December 18 that the grenade was Israeli army-made. It added that Arabs were still being arrested the second day on suspicion of involvement in the attack.

The Jerusalem Post quoted police sources as saying that the grenade was hurled from behind a market wall near a bus stop and exploded two metres from the bus. The paper added that two people were seen running away from the scene after the explosion.

Police immediately surrounded the area and detained all Arab workers in the area. Shops and residents were then searched and a number of people sent to police headquarters for questioning.

East Jerusalem police demolition experts defused a small homemade bomb December 18 which had been placed at a bus stop opposite Israeli police headquarters. The police combed the area for suspects.

Arab labourers inside the green line are routinely singled out for arrest following attacks on Israelis.

Inflation Fuels Local Crime Rise

Skyrocketing inflation, high unemployment and inefficient police protection are to blame for a recent wave of criminal activity in the West Bank. Shop windows were broken and merchandise stolen in Ramallah, robberies took place in Nablus and Bethlehem and car thefts were reported in Tulkarm. Thiefs apparently took advantage of cover provided by unusually heavy rains and electricity power cuts.

Windows were broken and merchandise valued at JD250 stolen at a clothing shop belonging to the head of Ramallah's Chamber of Commerce Ibrahim Far. Police arrived only moments later but were not able to chase the robbers because, according to Far, "there was no police car available." The thieves also hit a nearby shop.

Thieves broke into a gift shop in Bethlehem December 16 and escaped with an estimated US$100,000.

In Nablus December 13, a safe containing an unspecified amount of cash was taken from a shop and apparently rushed to a waiting car before police could arrive at the scene. Crime took its heaviest toll in Tulkarm, where robbers broke into a video shop in the western sector of the city December 13 and stole several video machines and tapes. Elsewhere in the city, windows of a private car were smashed and a private bus was stolen. The bus was found later across the "green line" west of Tulkarm.

Far said that some Palestinian youth, unable to find jobs locally or in Israel and unable to cope with the rising inflation rate, are probably resorting to criminal activities. Far has not filed an official complaint about his store to Ramallah police because, he says, he does not expect their investigation to yield any results. He claimed that Ramallah police are unable to offer suffficient protection to businesses in the city. Police should patrol the downtown area on a regular basis, he said.

Israeli papers carried reports two weeks ago that the new Israeli police minister plans to double the number of policemen working in the West Bank.

JEWISH TERRORIST ON TRIAL

"When I was arrested and brought to the interrogation cell, the GSS (General Security Service — Shin Bet) men hugged me and told me that I had performed a great service for the nation. They told me that our attack on the mayors was an event that everyone approved of, except for Peace Now. "We, as GSS agents," they said, "appreciate your action," Yitzhak Novat said in his testimony on December 19, 1984 at the trial of the Jewish underground in Jerusalem District Court.

Novat, accused of participating in the attack on the mayors, went on to say that the Shin Bet agents told him that they only began to investigate the underground in a serious manner after the attempt to bomb the buses.

Earlier in the week, Hagai Segal, also accused of participating in the attack on the mayors, told the court that he had done his army service as a guard at GSS headquarters and had learnt from discussions with GSS agents that they totally approved of the attack on the mayors.

Moshe Zar, another defendant and a major land dealer for West Bank settlers, made a similar claim. "A GSS agent told me during the investigation that they were on the same side of the fence. 'We're going to make this a historic trial,' he said. 'We know all about the eight sentences meted out to the terrorists. Take it from me, we're with you all the way.' "

In another development, Menachem Neuberger, also an underground suspect, was given a three-day holiday to attend the circumcision of his son, which took place at Susita settlement, 15 kilometres south of Hebron.

The trial now has largely been taken up by an investigation into how the GSS obtained the suspects' confessions.

The Dawn

AL FAJR

AL FAJR – Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly

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Al Fajr was founded in 1972 by Yusef Nasr, who edited the paper until his kidnapping in 1974. The English edition was first published in April 1980. **The Dawn (Al Fajr) Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly (UPS 686630)** is published weekly for $50.00 per year by Paul Ajlouny, 16 Crowell St., Hempstead. N.Y. 11550. Second class postage paid at Hempstead, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Al Fajr 2025 I Street, N.W., Suite 925, Washington D.C., 20006.

IKSAL DEMONSTRATION

A number of the Israeli Herut Party Youths Movement demonstrated at the entrance of Iksal Village in the Galilee to protest the attempt of MK Abdel Wahab Darawsheh (from Iksal and on the Labour Party list) to address the PNC Session held in Amman last month. Herut Party (the spinal cord of the Likud Coalition) could have chosen legally and officially to protest to its partner in the current government, the Labour Party, if the intention was to complain about Darawsheh's behaviour last month. Instead the Israeli Government and police permitted some Israelis to go to the home village of Darawsheh and disrupt the life of its residents.

However when Iksal residents wanted to defend their peace and stood together with peace-seeking Jewish Israelis the police were firm and tried to disburse them claiming their defensive position was illegal.

Although probably most Iksal residents did not vote Darawsheh into the Knesset and they might even believe that Darawsheh's attempt to attend the Amman PNC was based on sheer fantasy and personal illusion, still the Herut Youth Movement constituted a threat to their relative freedom of expression and of thought. Moreover it constituted a physical threat to the residents especially with the slogans raised by the heads and leaders of this movement punctuated by MK Cohen Avidov who told police: 'We should demonstrate every day in order to frighten them (the Arabs)'.

Despite Israeli-style democracy, the racist mentality and thoughts that led to the crisis in Palestine and accompanied the expulsion of the Palestinian people from its land before and during 1948 still prevails with some of the same leaders in government today.

Why then are people surprised at the rising Fascism among Israelis? Isn't this the natural result that the Zionist ideology led to? Aren't the Palestinians right when they say that their real enemy is Zionism?

The whole world which backs Zionist Israeli should rest assured. Palestinians will never become anti-Semitic but they will continue to struggle against Zionism as force that has oppressed them, in and outside their land, as the people of UM Al-FAHM, Dheisheh Camp, Ain Al-Hilwe and Iksal testify.

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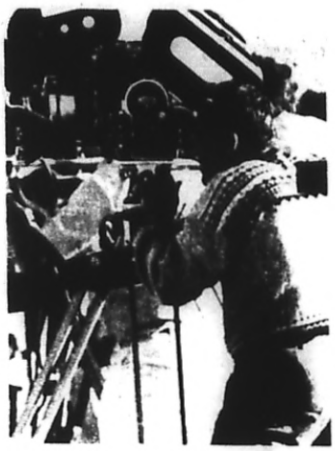
At the 17th PNC

Why Was the Media Left Out in the Cold?

by Ghassan Bishara
Our Washington, DC Correspondent



Security for the 17th session of the Palestine National Council (PNC) in Amman was stricter than at the last three sessions, observed by this reporter, and tighter than ever according to these who have attended most PNC sessions since 1964. Security was so strict, in fact, that it ceased to be a step taken for positive ends. Security forces were so uncompromisingly rigid that some journalists stayed in their hotels or, it was said left the country altogether. The line between required and self-defeating protection is not that thin, yet the line was easily crossed and pushed to the utmost here during the last week.

Jordanian security authorities had a "field day" with search, more search and yet more search. They conducted thorough searches on the street, on the way to the Cultural Centre where the Palestinian legislators were meeting and between two points not more than 10 metres distant from one another. In a speech to the council, PLO representative in Lebanon, Shafiq al-Hout, complained about "having to raise our hands both when we enter and when we exit" the hall. One assumes that the items concerning security forces would not be found in journalists' wallets and notebooks; yet those and other similar personal items were repeatedly searched.

Sadly enough, Arab journalists and others assigned to the Arab world accepted the searches as a matter of course, regardless of which Arab country they came from, while non-Arabs and journalists stationed outside the Middle East did not and tried to protest in "mild ' ways — to no avail. The former are apparently familiar with such treatment in their countries and know that protest will not help and that, in fact, it may be counterproductive.

The peak of this generally detestable treatment of the press was reached when between 250-300 journalists were left out of the opening session of the PNC November 22. After being bussed from their headquarters at Amman's Al Quds Hotel to the Cultural Centre at 3:00 pm, journalists were still literally out in the cold when the session opened at 6:00 pm. They only realised that the session had begun because a few had been listening to the proceeds on their portable radios. Major news organisations were left out of the session, including *Le Monde*, *Reuters*, *Wafa*, Scandinavian news organisations and *The Jordan Times*. Jordanian authorities later blamed the PLO, according to the November 24 issue of *The Jordan Times*. PNC Vice-President Salim Zaanoun, (Abu al-Adib) apologised to the press at a November 23 press conference but did not take responsibility for what had happened, leaving the impression that the PLO is not the party to blame. Some of the journalists who were left out expressed disbelief at what had happened Only at 7:00 pm were they escorted to a nearby hall to watch the proceeds on television. Television crews who came to cover the opening session live were forced to resort to Jordanian Television as their only source of news and photo coverge.

Although the PLO "may" not have been fully responsible for the above mishap, it certainly was responsible for other equally important failures. Much of the coverge of PNC sessions was broadcast to the non-Arabic-speaking world and thus many journalists who came to cover it did not understand Arabic. This must be known to PLO leaders, since the issue has been brought to their attention many times before. Yet no translation of speeches or proceedings was available for members of the press and delegates — not even, it is believed, for the few PNC members for whom Arabic has become a second language. The world should know about much of what took place at the PNC — "parliamentary debate at its best," as one European obsever put it. The PLO and the Palestinian people can only gain from publicising the democracy of the PNC. The PLO's failure to provide translations — even if only into English and or French — is unforgivable.

It was only due to a few English and French-speaking Palestinians and other Arabs that some foreign journalists and guests were able to keep up with parts of the proceedings. Many of the non-Arabic speakers missed the one-and-a-half-hour debate over the election of the new PNC president, which took place because former President Khalid al-Fahoum chose not to attend — or maybe was prevented from attending the session — and remained in Damascus with other prominent Palestinian leaders like Nayef Hawatmeh of PDFLP and Dr George Habash of the PFLP.

The debate over deposing Fahoum and electing a replacement was intense and legal points for and against al-Fahoum's removal were constantly cited. What most non-Arabic speaking journalists missed was precisely this exercise of democracy, "Palestinian style." Two Swedish journalists and a Swedish diplomat in Amman were highly impressed with what they saw and understood through translation efforts of this reporter. During another exercise of democratic Palestinian interaction, again translated by the same reporter, a Turkish journalist and a young and articulate member of the Turkish parliament half-seriously commented, "This is too much democracy." Of course, there is never too much democracy.

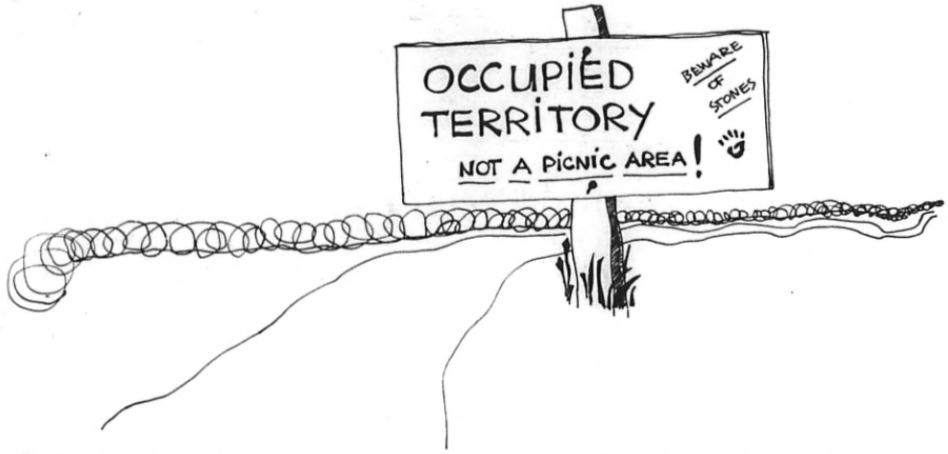
There were many such efforts by Arabic-speaking individuals, without whom much of this valuable debate wouldn't have reached the Western media and public and without whom a bright phase of Palestinian legislators in action would have been buried. A few days into the session, portable translation machines were finally introduced.

I have hopefully made it clear that the next time around, the PLO must provide at least English and French translations for non-Arabic speakers. It would certainly be very helpful if some of the speeches, committee reports and final resolutions were made available as well. The Arabic-speaking press was also not offered any of this material. Furthermore, it is hoped that security forces in any Arab country will do all required to protect such gatherings but not more, because then it is an irritation factor for the guests and a waste of energy for the security forces.

AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

Not Willing To Sing In The Israeli Chorus

by Gideon Spiro



I wrote the following article in response to Nahum Barnea's November 31 column in *Koteret Rashit* — in which he criticised the statement made by the Committee for Solidarity with Bir Zeit University in the wake of the Cremisan tragedy. However the editor of *Koteret Rashit* was not prepared to publish my article in full and told me that it would be edited down to a letter to the editor. My offer to condense the article was rebuffed and my "letter" appeared in print only after the main points of my argument had been amputated from the text. To put it bluntly, I feel that I haven't been given a fair shake by the magazine.

I was impressed by the open-mindedness of *Al Fajr* in publishing a translation of Barnea's column (in their November 16 issue) in spite of the fact that it contained an attack on the Committee. I am grateful that I have been given the opportunity to publish the *complete* text of my article in the pages of *Al Fajr* and I hope this will teach Barnea something about what freedom of the press is all about.

Gideon Spiro,
Spokesperson of the Committee for Solidarity with Bir Zeit University

Nahum Barnea lashed out at the Committee for Solidarity with Bir Zeit University for having issued a statement after the tragic death of the Israeli couple near the Cremisan Monastry, calling on Israelis to refrain from hiking in the occupied territories because these territories are not theirs. Barnea claimed that "this statement is so idiotic, that it's hard to argue with it in a matter-of-fact way." However my contention is that the Committee's statement was sound, judicious, and appropriate — albeit, I concede, very unpopular.

After seventeen years of occupation and rule over the Palestinian people, many of our most basic concepts have become distorted and warped. The occupied territories have come to be seen as "liberated territories" which are part of our homeland. In official jargon they are referred to as "Judea and Samaria" — biblical appellations which invoke a pastoral landscape that hs been ours since time immemorial. Palestinian commandos are called terrorists and have even been termed "two-legged beasts." The Palestinians are viewed as "drugged cockroaches" who have no rights and ought to stamped out. The Israeli army, which once was a defence force, has become an army of occupation, whose duty is to rule over and oppress a civilian population; but officially, it is still known as the "Israel Defence Forces" or the security forces. It would seem that the Hebrew language has yet to coin a term for an occupation army.

The destruction of the homes of Palestinian families, innocent of any crime, is viewed as "a method for punishing wrong-doers" and the mass imprisonment of Palestinians in prison camps is ostensibly carried out in order to "interrogate suspects and preserve order." Opposition to the occupation is seen as riotous behaviour and Palestinian demonstrations are always referred to as "the actions of an incited mob." These are only a few examples of the new nomenclature that has come to be adopted in Israeli society. It is thus hardly surprising that it has fertilised the soil for a homegrown variety of fascistic racism.

Israeli doves have also been co-opted into this mindset in their everyday lives. Many of them frequently drive to Bethlehem or the Cremisan Monastery — treating these areas as extensions of Jerusalem — in order to take advantage of the scenery, buy a couple of bottles of wine, or for a lovers' romp. So it is that the real situation has been blurred and it has become apposite to remind Israelis that when they cross the country's 1967 borders, they are entering a military zone, ruled by a military government and army decrees. Over a million Palestinians live in the occupied territories — deprived of their rights, discriminated against, subject to constant harassment, torture and collective punishments meted out by the occupying power, namely, the Israeli army.

The occupied territories are not the pastoral landscapes they may seem to be and the people living there have no say in how they are governed. By going hiking in the occupied territories, one enters an area governed by laws that are totally different from those in force in the state of Israel. And equally important, Israelis who hike in the occupied territories are viewed by the Palestinians living there as yet another manifestation of the never-ending provocation by which they are told that the land they call home belongs to the Israelis and not to them — the Palestinians.

This is the background against which one must view the Cremisan killings. The background of the killer is also relevant. The majority of Israelis do not know that the Palestinian who fired the shots at the couple had a 15-year-old cousin who was killed in Dheisheh refugee camp two years ago by Israeli occupation forces. (Nahum Barnea, was that a case of cold-blooded murder or not?) For the past three years a Palestinian mother has been grieving over her 15-year-old son, and now, two sets of Israeli parents are in the same situation.

We of the Solidarity Committee do not apply one standad to Jews and another one to Arabs. Both the couple and the 15-year-old camp resident were the sacrificial victims of the occupation. We believe that both Jews and Arabs should have the right to be free and not be subjet to degredation. Now, the question is: how can this cycle of violence ever be stopped? Our answer is as follows: The occupation and rule of the Israeli people over the Palestinian people has become a pestilant swamp that breeds hatred and violence. If this cycle of violence is to be halted, the swamp of occupation must be drained to the dregs. No people wants to be ruled over by another people. We didn't want the British to rule over us during the Mandate period and the Palestinians are no different.

In the present circumstances, the move toward draining swamp of occupation is considered to be a revolutionary step in Israel although the rest of the world takes it for granted that this is the only solution to the problem. We must begin to talk to the Palestinian people and their representatives about a political solution to the conflict that will honour the national rights of both peoples. Barnea poses the question of whether a statement such as this should be made in the wake of a tragedy. Our answer is: then more than ever! For when Israelis — from the socialist Nahum Barnea to the fascist Rabbi Levinger — join hands for the purpose of national condemnations, it is high time that those few people who are not willing to sing in their chorus tell the nation the true story as they see it. The prophets of Israel did the same, when they told their countrymen the bitter truth in spite of the fact that they were busy prostrating themselves before false idols and were not willing to lend an ear to their words.

Barnea equated our committee with Rabbi Druckman. Where is the symmetry? Druckman is one of the piston rods driving us to further atrocities, similar to the Cremisan killings and the rocket attack on the bus. In contrast, we aspire to end the cycle of bloodshed. Furthermore, Druckman is a racist; we recognize that the principle of equality applies to both Jews and Arabs. And finally, if the leaders of Gush Emunim were to suffer the same fate as that arranged by their friends for the Arab mayors of the West Bank, we wouldn't respond as Druckman did, by saying "may all our enemies suffer the same"; we will say that such an act is a direct consequence of the occupation. And we shall not hesitate to repeat that the only way out of this cycle of violence is through negotiations, co-existence, and peace. (Translation from Zu Ha'derech, November 28, 1984)

Book Review: In Defence of Roots

The Fight to Return Islamic Community Property

by Awad Abdel Fattah

***In Defence of Roots*, by Fathi Fourani. Published by Beit al-Sadaqa, 1984, Nazareth. IS2000. 158 pages.**

Islamic *waqf* property inside the 1948 borders is being held hostage by the Israeli government, under great secrecy. The veil has been partially lifted, however, by a unique study published last month entitled *In Defence of Roots*, by Fathi Fourani, the head of the Haifa-based Islamic Initiative Committee set up in 1976 to wage a political struggle for the return of Israeli-held *waqf* property to the Palestinian Muslim community, as Islamic law requires.

Roots's 158 pages centre on one case — the destruction of the al-Istiqlal (Independence) cemetery by Israeli bulldozers in June 1981. Fourani, who was directly involved in the case and made a detailed follow-up investigation, uses it as a key to understanding Israel's overall policy towards Islamic *waqf* property and holy places. While carrying out his work, he was subjected to threats and his house was broken into by unknown people, "probably to destroy documents and property deeds which I had collected for use in the research," he told *Al Fajr* at the time.

Through the issue of Haifa's al-Istiqlal cemetery, Fourani exposes Israeli interference in the internal affairs of the *waqf* and the exploitation of Muslim community property for purposes not related to the interests of the Palestinian Muslim community. Towards this purposes and, in contravention of Islamic and *sharia* laws, Israel has appointed, according to Fourani, "puppet trustee committees consisting of collaborators to use them as an Islamic cover for the theft of *waqf* property."

Haifa Cemetery Razed

Clashes [illegible] Palestinians [illegible] Israeli police and border guards [illegible] last week as Haifa municipality completed the destruction of the Istiqlal Muslim cemetery in downtown Haifa. [illegible] Arab [illegible] Christian [illegible] people were also [illegible] and detained for three days.

The Israeli-run Haifa municipality claims that it is clearing the [illegible] cemetery [illegible] Muslim [illegible] that Nazareth [illegible] started destroying the [illegible] Mahmoud Muhammad Makhlouf, [illegible] Zaki Abu Nasr [illegible]

[illegible] Fourani, the secretary of the Islamic Initiative Committee in Haifa, told Al Fajr that he was [illegible] alarmed at the horrible [illegible] action." "The bones of our ancestors are being dug up and [illegible] carried away. [illegible] destruction [illegible] Muslim people [illegible] of their religious [illegible]

At a June 8 meeting the HIC discussed various ways to counter the attack. They contacted the chairman of the Knesset interior committee, Shlomo Hillel, [illegible] to stop the work [illegible] [illegible] said since publicity [illegible]

[illegible] the Israeli-appointed Haifa Waqf committee, issued a fatwa (binding declaration) allowing the removal of the cemetery. The **Jerusalem Post** reported June 12 that as part of the deal for giving the green light for destruction Kadi Hbeishi's committee received IS 500,000. The HIC rejected the fatwa and has been pressing Hbeishi to cancel it on the grounds that it contravenes the "vital interests of the Muslim community.

Fathi Fourani told Al Fajr after the destruction was completed that he believes the authorities will punish government officials and Jewish religious circles on the site of the cemetery. He pointed out to Al Fajr that the HIC had repeatedly proposed other Waqf [illegible] Haifa which could have been used for housing Muslims. The authorities refused to consider our proposals for sites like Tel Al Abta or Ar Hallis." Fourani [illegible]

Top: Bulldozers rampage through al-Istiqlal cemetery June 1981, destroying all 3000 graves. Three years later the graves have not been transferred and the promised housing project has not been built on the site. Bottom: Reprint from *Al Fajr*, June 14, 1981, describes the massive destruction and subsequent protest.

What Is the Waqf?

Waqf property is nanded over to the trusteeship of Islamic *waqf* authorities by individuals for the benefit of the Muslim community. When property is put under *waqf* control, the donor must specify how its income will be appropriated for community use: for instance to finance schools, mosques or social services. Once the deed is made the property cannot be bought or sold — it belongs to the whole Muslim community. It must be managed by trustees named in the *waqf* declaration or those appointed by the local *qadi* or *sharia* court.

Public *waqf* property, which includes mosques, cemeteries, land and houses, had been under the supervision of the Higher Islamic Council (HIC) until 1948, which had designated it for communal purposes. When the HIC was broken up and its members dispersed outside Palestine after 1948, the Israeli government declared all *waqf* holdings "absentee property" and confiscated them.

"After all the *waqf* property was taken," the writer remarks, "some was released back to Israeli-appointed cosmetic *waqf* committees, usually headed by a *qadi* who was appointed by the Israeli Religious Affairs Ministry." The fact that the appointees were paid by the Israeli prime minister's office, through the prime minister's advisor on Arab affairs, contradicts Islamic law since the government official is not a Muslim. "The Israeli official," Fourani wryly remarks, "assumed that God was absent." They confiscated the *waqf* property and put it under the supervision of an official committee consisting of the absentee property custodian, representatives of the so-called Israel Land Administration, the Finance and Housing Ministries and headed by the prime minister's advisor on Arab affairs. Fourani says bluntly that the Israelis have robbed the *waqf* over the last 36 years and used the income coming from it, estimated at thousands of millions of dollars, for their own interests. *Waqf* property constituted over 6 percent of the total land mass of Palestine, "according to a report prepared by a special inquiry commission in 1936," and much of it was valuable urban real estate.

Although Fourani has painstakingly prepared a list of the *waqf* property in Haifa alone, after six years of search and work, the exact size of the total *waqf* property inside Israel is not yet known. According to him, it is difficult to find out even the location of all property. Israel has either destroyed the sites or built on top of them commercial centres or housing units for Jewish immigrants, or converted mosques into museums and cafeterias, such as in Beer Sheba and Ain Hod village. Many other holy places, like mosques and cemeteries, some of which have been destroyed, have been run down by neglect and become garbage dumps. "This is done intentionally," Fourani charges, "in order to justify the destruction of the sites after people forget about them."

Fourani views this behaviour towards the *waqf* property as being part of Israel's policy to submerge the Arab presence in Palestine. "We cannot view this issue separately from the essential cause and the official policy practiced against the Palestinian Arab who has remained on his homeland. We consider the Israeli policy towards the Arab holy sites, Islamic and Christian, as part of the official policy which has been followed by Israel throughout the lifetime of the state in order to carry out its ideology and plans for the purpose of obliterating the Palestinian presence from the map of his homeland." He adds, "And since the Arab holy sites are one of the landmarks which testify to our belonging to this homeland, they have been a target for obliteration and destruction."

Al-Istiqlal Cemetery

The destruction of al-Istiqlal cemetery in downtown Haifa, which caused an unprecedented local and international uproar over the desecration of a religious site, is approached by the writer not only through relating the very small details of the issue but by connecting between the events and exposing the manner in which the Israelis have been using the trustee committees and the *Qadis*.

The Haifa Moslem community heard about a plan to destroy the cemetery in 1977 by rumour only. They were not notified about it from any official source. Nor did the Trustee Committee or the *Qadi*, Mohammed Hbeisheh, Acre, forewarn them about any such plan. After three years of rumour they became certain that the Israelis were poised to destroy the cemetery. It came out later that the head of the appointed trustee committee in Haifa, Suheil Shukri, had signed with the Israeli Housing Ministry to destroy the cemetery and build 72 housing units for Palestinian families who face housing shortages in its place. This was done secretly in coordination with the Israeli Prime Minister's office. For this purpose a *fatwa*, religious decree, was obtained from the Israeli appointed *Qadi*.

As soon as the Palestinian Moslems in Haifa heard of the concrete plans, they rushed to the cemetery and cleaned it. Along with this clean-up campaign, the Haifa Islamic initiative committee — which is not recognized by the government — intensified its work towards thwarting such plan. The committee believed that it violated the laws of Islam and held that if the "government was really interested in solving the housing problem of the Haifa Palestinian community, it can build houses in other places where there is vacant *waqf* property." The representatives of the initiative committee hurried to the Prime Minister's office in Jerusalem, met the Advisor for Arab affiars and discussed the issue with him. He claimed that they had obtained a *fatwa* from the *Qadi* allowing the project. But when the *Qadi* was asked by the committee to cancel the *fatwa* he answered that he was a mere employee of the Religious Affairs Ministry and he could do nothing. In the meantime Suheil Shukri secretly immigrated to the US five years ago — with US$100,000 — fearing anger mounting against him among the Haifa Palestinian community.

A copy of the contract between Shukri and the Housing Ministry is included in the book. It shows that he signed a secret purchase deal and pocketed the money, "like tens of other unrevealed deals."

In the end Israeli bulldozers pushed their way onto the cemetery grounds and ploughed up 3000 graves "in a brutal and barbarian way." Tens of people who rushed to the site to stop the vandalism were arrested and held several days. Within one hour, the cemetery was completely destroyed, with grave stones and bones scattered. The scene resembled the aftermath of an earthquake.

Three years have passed: the graves have not been transferred to another cemetery as the authorities promised, nor was the housing project carried out. Describing what happened later, Fourani writes, "The next day, after the destruction, the directors of destruction came to cross the t's and dot the is', and actually unmasked the real face of this deal. The sign 'This Is A Sacred Place' was replaced by 'Housing Ministry Property. State of Israel. Entry Forbidden.'"

Fourani unfolds the [illegible] reflecting the core of Israeli policy towards the Islamic holy places and points out the tactic used to achieve their ends. "The Israeli authorities would [illegible] to obtain any piece of paper signed by 'formal' Islamic party to [illegible]

continued on p.

Fawar Refugees Tell Their Story

1984 in Fawar Refugee Camp

One of the 19 refugee camps in the West Bank, Fawar, is the most southern and one of the least visited. **Maher AbuKhater** describes its short history and current conditions for the refugees from southern Palestine.

Kids from Fawar camp, home to 6000 refugees, on their way to school. *Indoor plumbing and electricity were only recently extended at the camp residents' own initiative and expense.*

Refugees in Fawar camp live in conditions that rank among the worst of all refugee camps in the occupied West Bank.

When United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) built Fawar in 1957, it had only small rooms not exceeding 10 square metres for families of 10 or more. Residents lacked basic facilities like indoor toilets, plumbing and electricity. Since then, improvements of the most basic order have been made: the approximately 6000 residents of Fawar have been able to bring water to their homes, build indoor plumbing, add one extra room and receive four hours of electricity daily. These slight improvements still left conditions in Fawar among the worst in West Bank camps.

Fawar camp is located 10 kilometres south of Hebron and about 32 kilometres northeast of Beer Sheba.

Fawar means "natural spring" in Arabic. Located on outlying hills owned by the 'Amr family of Dura, Fawar was built in an area controlled by local bandits, far from any major urban centre. Its only source of water was a spring the British had tapped into during the Mandate to bring water to the Hebron area.

The camp is built around a main road that connects the Hebron-Beer Sheba highway with the Jordan valley. Though small and full of potholes, the road is used regularly by Israeli army trucks because it is the only link between Hebron and an army camp near the village of Yatta. Usually wary of entering refugee camps, the Israeli army has taken pains to suppress Fawar, according to youths in the camp, so nothing will disturb the army route.

The UNRWA-run youth centre, which was established in 1957, was shut down by the Israeli military government in 1981 on the pretext that it was engaging in "political" activities. It was allowed to reopen early this year but the group had lost its enthusiasm and active members. According to Ma'an Hleiqat, a member in the centre, the youth centre was very active before it was closed. "It used to sponsor lectures and have all kinds of activities," he said. "Now, after the centre has reopened," he added, "it will be sometime before we can take it back to what it was before." The centre is currently facing several internal problems — administrative and financial. The members are also worried that if they carry on a serious activity, it may be closed once more. It is currently concentrating on sports.

Expected to Stay Five Years

The refugees arrived at Fawar in the early 1950s from areas in the Gaza and Hebron districts. Most of them came from the village of Beit Jibreen, only a few kilometres west of Hebron. Others came from Kidna, Dawaymeh and Sumeil in the Hebron district, Faloujeh and Iraq al-Manshieh in the Gaza district, and from 20 other Palestinian villages captured in 1948 by the Zionist army.

Almost 30 percent of Fawar residents are refugees from Beit Jibreen. Nine percent came from Faloujeh, another nine percent from Iraq al-Manshieh, seven percent from Sumeil, and six percent from Kidna.

Beit Jibreen refugees left their homes before May 1948 while sporadic fighting and civilian massacres were taking place. They came to the Hebron area and settled at a refugee camp known as Azzah (later called Beit Jibreen camp). Many of them moved to Fawar when the Red Cross set up tents for them there. The Israelis built the town of Beit Guvrin on the site of the destroyed Beit Jibreen.

Refugees from Faloujeh and Iraq al-Manshieh had a different story (see box). Red Cross trucks evacuated them to the Solomon Pools area, near Bethlehem. But because there was not enough land to accommodate them,they moved to other refugee camps in the Hebron area supervised by the International Committee of the Red Cross. Many settled in the short-lived Beer al-Sufla camp, set up near the cease-fire line between the new Jewish state and the Jordanian-controlled areas in the south. Beer al-Sufla refugees were later evacuated by the Jordanian army because they would return to their villages, crossing cease-fire lines, to bring personal belongings and food from their fields.

"Life was very difficult during the first years of immigration," said Hassan Qassem, *mukhtar* of Faloujeh refugees in Fawar camp. "The refugees had no choice but to return to their fields to get food for their families." Many refugees were killed by the Israeli army while crossing ceasefire lines. They also disturbed the Jordanian government, then under the rule of King Abdullah, because they were breaking the armistice signed to end the 1948 war. The Jordanians therefore moved Beer al-Sufla refugees to Fawar, near Yatta, and to other camps in the neighbourhood.

The refugees were given tents and told that their stay in Fawar — not to exceed five years — would end when a solution was found to the Palestinian issue. When the five years passed without any noticeably positive change in the Palestinian status quo, the tents were replaced with brick huts, each barely enough to house one person. But the refugees, without any other choice and totally helpless, tried their best to adjust to living there. As many as ten people forced themselves to live in one room homes with an area of 10 square metres. There was no electricity, no water, no indoor plumbing, no beds. They had to sleep on mattresses on the floor so that there would be enough room for everybody.

1948 to 1984

Thirty-six years later, things have not changed much. The winter is still very cold and the summer very hot. The refugees are still the poorest in the West Bank because Fawar is not near any major city where they could find work. Under Jordanian rule, the refugee labourers were transported to Ramtha area in Jordan's East Bank to cultivate the land for four months a year. They would stay away from their families all these four months until harvest time was over, and remain virtually jobless the other eight months of the year.

After Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967, the refugees began to work in Israeli cities. The closest to them is Beer Sheba. The refugees leave early every morning for Beer Sheba to work in meagre jobs and return home by the early afternoon. With the current severe economic situation in Israel, many of them are unemployed. The residents fear that when unemployment becomes widespread and its consequences are felt, life may become worse.

The poverty of Fawar refugees has prevented them from improving their conditions as other refugees in the West Bank have done over the years. The improvements made were the most necessary ones to accomodate basic human needs. In the early 1970s, the refugees were able to collect enough money to build a water system that reaches every house in the camp. They built indoor plumbing and added a small room to each hut. Electricity also reached the camp in the early 1970s when one of the refugees bought a generator and built an electric system. Not all the refugees benefited from this generator, however, as many were unable to afford the hook-up charge.

Later the refugees got together and decided to start an electric cooperative to free themselves from the control of the sole owner of the electric generator. In 1974, they formed a cooperative and bought a communal generator. As the number of refugees who wanted electricity grew, the cooperative had to buy a larger generator. They were assisted in this purchase by a foreign development agency which contributed 85 percent of the cost. But because the new generator is very big, it requires a large amount of fuel to run it. With the current high cost of fuel, they therefore limit use to four hours at night.

Although not many refugees are lucky enough to study abroad, many finish their higher education at a West Bank college or an Arab university. Those who do leave the camp to study find readjustment to its conditions tough. "We cannot even listen to the radio during the day," said a university student who studied abroad and now finds readjustment to living conditions in Fawar frustrating. "We have to use battery-run radios but this is sometimes expensive," he complained. Residents are also unable to buy refrigerators, washing machines or anything else that runs on electrity.

Waste Disposal Dilemmas

The water reaches all the homes. Those who live higher on the hill have a hard time getting any water, however, due to poor water pressure. One hilltop family said they have to wait till night before the water reaches their house. They fill several tanks at a time and keep them for the next day's use.

Because no roads reach the houses of the main road in the camp, and because there is no sewage system, UNRWA sewage-collection trucks cannot empty the sewage holes of homes at the top of the hill. As a result, these residents have no choice but to dump their sewage outside. UNRWA opened shallow canals that pass between buildings in the camp for sewage to drain to the bottom of the hill and then flow through other canals on the main road to sewage holes which the trucks can reach.

A similar procedure is followed for garbage disposal. The refugees have to dump their garbage in the open fields near their homes between cactus plants which grow everywhere in the camp. At night, without any electricity, refugees who live on the hill have difficulty picking their way to their homes, particularly since the side roads they must use are rough and cactus plants abound.

With the outdoor garbage dumps and the open sewage system, health conditions in the camp are naturally very poor. In the summer, the camp is infested with mosquitoes. Intense heat inside the small thin-walled rooms drives the refugees outside at night to sleep. There they have to battle the insects which, according to one young refugee, "eat us alive and never allow us to get a good night's sleep." In the winter there are no insects to deal with but the poorly constructed rooms provide almost no shelter against the cold, making it difficult to keep homes warm. One portly middle-aged woman observed that "if I have a hard time keeping warm in the winter with all this fat on my body, how is it possible for the children and the elderly?"

UNRWA Defaults

UNRWA supplied the refugees with blankets and basic foodstuffs until four years ago when budget shortages forced it to cut rations to all except those who show extreme need. A social affairs department was set up to decide who among the refugees needed the relief aid. Of the 300-plus families at Fawar, only 95 were found to be eligible for aid. One middle-aged woman who lost her rations rights complained that selection of eligible people is not fair. She said she and many others in the camp still need the assistance because they are very poor. UNRWA gives assistance to families with children all under 18 and whose elder is over 65 years of age. Heads of families who are handicapped also render the family eligible for assistance.

As far as outside assistance goes, the refugees are not eligible for what is called "steadfastness money" allocated by Arab countries to help Palestinians under Israeli occupation stay on their land rather than emigrate. When refugees inquired about this money, they were told that because they are under UNRWA supervision, they are not eligible for steadfastness funds. Meanwhile the refugees watch fancy new houses being built in the West Bank and other Arab countries, allegedly by "steadfastness" money, and feel bitter resentment towards their fellow Palestinians who are not giving them the attention they need.

Even though Fawar falls within the Hebron district, refugees complain it never attracted the attention or aid of any of the municipalities, particularly the former Arab ones. If UNRWA is unable to help them, as is quite likely given the projected US$50 million budget shortage for next year, Fawar refugees will be left without any assistance even from local nationalist institutions. They are very worried that the bad economic situation in Israel, the cuts in UNRWA aid, and the lack of outside assistance will force them to fend for themselves.

Still no sewage system or garbage disposal...

FAWAR REFUGEES TELL THEIR STORY

A 9-Month Siege in S. Palestine, 1948

The 88-day siege of Beirut in the summer of 1982, during which the Israeli army used its most terrible fire power against a defenceless civilian centre, was not a unique exhibition of Israeli "bravery." In 1948 two Palestinian towns, Faloujeh and nearby Iraq a-Manshieh, were besieged by Israeli forces and bombarded from air and land for nine full months. The siege did not end until Egypt signed an armistice with the newly founded Jewish state of Israel under United Nations auspices, and the Egyptian army stationed in these two towns retreated to the Gaza Strip.

Faloujeh was a developed city with a population of 12,000 before the 1948 war that split Palestine. Iraq al-Manshieh, only a few kilometres away, was a village with a population of 3000. Faloujeh and Iraq al Manshieh no longer exist. The area in the southwestern part of Palestine, near the Gaza Strip, has been renamed "Kiryat Gat" by the Israeli state.

Hassan Qassem, *mukhtar* of refugees from Faloujeh who now live in Fawar refugee camp near Hebron, and Annaz Titi, *mukhtar* of Iraq al-Manshieh refugees in Fawar, are both relatives of the leaders in their villages of origin. They narrated the story of the siege of their towns and what was to be the final departure from their homes in this way:

When war broke out between the Arab countries bordering Palestine and the Jewish army following the withdrawal of British mandate forces from Palestine on May 15, 1948, King Farouq of Egypt sent an army to Palestine. Around 15,000 Egyptian soldiers crossed the Sinai into Palestine and established strongholds around Faloujeh and nearby villages. A contingent of about 3000 Egyptian soldiers was stationed in Iraq al-Manshieh under the leadership of Jamal Abd al-Nasser. About 4000 soldiers were sent to Faloujeh.

The Egyptian army, however, was unable to stop the gradual takeover of Palestine by the Zionist army which was backed up by aerial force. Most of the Egyptian army soon withdrew from the area leaving the local contingents in Faloujeh and Iraq al-Manshieh completely surrounded. Nasser and other Egyptian commanders in Faloujeh were worried that if they tried to withdraw they would be wiped out. So they choose to hold on to their fortified positions until a political solution was found.

For nine long months the Egyptian army and the Palestinian residents of that area who chose to stay and defend their homes were subjected to continuous land and air attacks. At the same time the Zionist forces tried several times to break the thin Egyptian and Palestinian defence lines around the villages but were always pushed back after suffering heavy casualties.

At one time, a contingent of the Jewish army estimated at 1500 was able to break the defence line from a point held by a Sudanese branch of the Arab armies. The Sudanese, locals say, were drunk that night and the Zionists surprised them, killed them all and entered the village of Iraq al-Manshieh. But as the Jewish soldiers were entering the village, their own planes attakced them, believing they were Egyptians, and killed about 100 soldiers.

Village residents were much surprised that night by the appearance of the soldiers. They were rounded up and grouped in certain homes in the village. When Nasser learned of the incident he immediately sent his soldiers inside the village and engaged the Zionists in hand-to-hand battle. The Egyptians wiped out the whole squad and regained control of the village.

During the siege, local residents who knew the area very well used to sneak through enemy lines to bring ammunition from the Egyptian army stationed outside the village to the Egyptian soldiers under siege. Several times residents would leave the village and return with camel loads of ammunition via valleys separating the Egyptian and Israeli armies. If they were spotted by the enemy, the Egyptians would cover for them by shooting. This helped the Egyptians to hold on through the long siege months.

As for food supplies, the Palestinian villages were known for their rich land planted with wheat, corn and vegetables. The residents shared their harvests with their protectors. Jamal Abd al Nasser reportedly was so impressed by the dedication of the *mukhtar* of Iraq al-Manshieh, whose first name was Khalid, that he named his first son after him. The heroic residents who carried arms against the invading army established long term friendships with the Egyptians.

It has always been alleged that during this siege, Nasser and his military colleagues started thinking of staging a coup against the monarchy in Cairo because their headquarters had given up on them and sent no aid.

Throughout the battle, the Egyptian commanders of the besieged army regularly met with their Israeli counterparts under UN auspices to discuss ending the siege. It was proposed that the Egyptian officers withdraw, leaving army and residents behind them; that the whole army withdraw; that the army withdraw and take the villagers along too. The Egyptians rejected all proposals on the grounds that they did not guarantee that residents who stayed behind would not be harmed or that the villages would not be taken over by the Jewish forces.

After nine months the Egyptians and Israelis signed an armistice which called for supervision of the villages by the International Committee of the Red Cross in order to protect the Palestinian residents. Late in 1949 the Egyptian army was evacuated to Egypt, taking with it some of the local residents, particularly those village heads who had carried arms against the Zionist army.

Thousands of villagers stayed behind. Soon after the evacuation, the Israeli army broke the agreement and entered the villages. Many villagers were arrested and accused of being members of the Palestinian armed underground. Life was made so difficult for them that they decided to leave the village temporarily. Some managed to cross the ceasefire lines with the Jordanian army. They met with King Abdullah of Jordan and pleaded with him to help them leave. In an agreement between King Abdullah, the Red Cross and the Israeli army, about 50 Red Cross trucks were allowed to go to the villages to secure passage for the rest of the Palestinian residents. Faloujeh was evacuated first, and its residents were taken to the Hebron area. Iraq al-Manshieh residents were taken from the immediate area and placed on the side of a main road to wait for Red Cross trucks to take them to the Hebron area. They waited for 25 days without any shelter, all their belongings scattered on the street, until the trucks could return and take them to Hebron. The Red Cross was delayed by the Zionist troops.

When they reached the Hebron area, the refugees found thousands of others who had escaped the war area already established in tent shelters supplied by the Red Cross. They joined their compatriots because they believed they would be allowed to return to their homes soon, as promised.

Christmas in Bethlehem

How Much Is That Camel?

One of the few growing economic sectors in the occupied territories is the service field of tourism. In Bethlehem it constitutes the major industry. Daoud Kuttab looks at how inflation and Israeli interference has cut into the local business.

Almost every pilgrim and even non-religious tourist to the area puts the city of Bethlehem, the cradle of Christianity, on his itinerary. Selling locally-made gifts to visiting tourists and pilgrims in Bethlehem probably began with the construction of the Church of the Basilica, or The Nativity Church, by Queen Helena during Byzantine rule in 325. It is not only one of the oldest Churches in the world but one of th most beautiful.

Bethlehem's 56 assorted souvenir and gift shops, which feature everything from 25 cent olive wood thimbles to diamond rings for several thousand dollars, comprise the heart of the Bethlehem district's economy. Israeli manufacturers also benefit from receipts for the flood of goods to their many Bethlehem accounts.

Seasonal Business

Despite its high profit margin, the tourist gift shop business, like the rest of the tourism business, is affected by seasonal fluctuations. The month of December is generally a high season but shopowners say most tourists arrive right at Christmas time. "If a tourist is planning to visit the area in December, you can be sure that he will come around the 25th in order to spend Christmas Eve in Bethlehem," said Costa Canavati, owner of the huge Herodian gift shop. Canavati, whose family owns some of the largest gift shops in the city, said that business also picks up around Easter in March or April but that the September to November period is the season's high. Seasonal fluctuations place a great financial burden on shopowners who must maintain a large staff at all times in order to accommodate sudden bursts of business.

Most tourists or pilgrims arrive to the city by tour bus. The groups are usually led by their own tour leader and a local licensed tourist guide. With most tourists housed in Jerusalem hotels, the mandatory 20-minute trip to Bethlehem is usually scheduled for a morning or an afternoon during the seven-day packaged tour to the Holy Land. On the way to or from the Church of Nativity almost every tourist bus that drives on the Jerusalem-Bethlehem road makes a stop at one of the big souvenir shops. What encourages the tourist buses to make the 15-30 minute stop at a particular gift shop is money. Although it is illegal, gift shop owners lure tour leaders, guides and bus drivers with a percentage commission on the total purchases of the tourists. In addition to gifts and special treatment, tourists guides are paid a whopping 25-45 percent of sales that average US$1-2,000 a bus and can even reach tens of thousands of dollars if tourists are interested in precious jewelry.

Complaints from smaller shop owners have failed to effect any change in the way tourists buses are fought over by competing shop owners. One tourist shop owner said he favored a regulation that would allow shopowners to pay a set commission of 10 percent. This way the money incentive would not be the only factor that decides where the tourist bus stops.

Closure

The tough competition between souvenir shop owners in the Bethlehem area has at times resulted in violent clashes as well as interference and punitive measures from Israeli tourist officials.

As in all business, the standard way of soliciting is through contacts and good treatment of the buyers. Since most customers are one-timers, the trick of the trade is to establish good relations with regular tour leaders, who command a great deal of control over the members of their groups. Bethlehem shopowners try to keep in touch with tour leaders they meet. As soon as they learn of a tour's arrival, the shopowners immediately get in touch to make sure that when the group comes to Bethlehem it will stop for a few minutes at their stores.

But tough competition has rendered this method unreliable for most gift shop owners. They have learned to send one of their employees to Manger Square where the tourist buses stop at the Church of the Nativity. While the group is seeing the church, gift shop employees try to entice tourists to visit their shop. This practise is used for tourists who have no previous contacts with any Bethlehem store as well as with those who do have contacts. Using the bargaining power of a higher sales cut and additional gifts, the employee tries his sales pitch on the tour leader.

Recently this practise has led to charges of "harassing" tourists and the military-ordered closure of two Bethlehem souvenir shops. Six other shops received warnings. Shukri Batarseh, one of the owners of the Seven Gates shop, felt that he was unjustly harmed by the closure decision. He said his employees were only talking to the tour leaders at Manger Square. Zvi Nefo, the Israeli officer in charge of tourism, felt otherwise. Using Jordanian law which allows him to carry act against anyone "harming" the tourist industry, he closed the shops for two weeks — three weeks before Christmas. Bethlehem mayor Elias Freij, who himself owns a souvenir shop in Manger Square, interfered on behalf of the shopowners and was able to get the shops opened one week early. After the incident Batarseh didn't want to talk to the press. His only comment was to accuse fellow businessmen of a lack of solidarity with him.

Jordanian law gave its minister of tourism wide-ranging powers over the West Bank's tourist industry. The Israeli officer in charge of tourism in the military government assumed the Jordanian minister's job, basing his interference with normal business on the Jordanian law which is selectively put into effect.

Legal sources in Bethlehem questioned both the method and actions of the Israeli authorities. Jodeh Shahwan, legal advisor to the Bethlehem municipality, felt that the Israeli authorities use only the sections in the Jordanian law which please them.

Handicrafts

The abundance of olive wood in Palestine is the major reason why olive wood handiworks are the area's top-selling tourist item. One and two-man olive wood factories fill the Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour areas. The trade is handed down from father to son (rarely to daughters.) Modern machinery is now in use and most religious articles and statuettes are made on newly acquired copying machines. The Nativity set which features a cave-like structure containing replicas of the scene of the birth of Christ is the most popular wood item. Ranging in size and detail, nativity sets can be sold for as little as US$25 and as much as US$3,000.

Although mother-of-pearl handicrafts have a long tradition in Bethlehem, the second hottest selling item is brass, much of it imported from Israel or India. A number of Bethlehem shopowners say they prefer the handcrafted works of Nazareth and Acre Palestinian brass shops rather than those of Tel Aviv factories.

Diamonds

Until 1967, gift shops did not feature jewelry. But along with soldiers the Israeli occupation also introduced Israeli-made or imported jewelry. The good relations between South Africa and Israel bring huge quantities of uncut diamonds which are cut and set in Israeli factories. Bethlehem shops can sell European and American tourists diamond-studded jewelry for prices at least 25 percent less than what they would pay for the same item in their home towns. As a result, Bethlehem shops devote most of their space to jewelry. Some shops even provide optical aids for customers to check the quality of the diamonds and give money-back guarantees to the doubting tourists.

For nearly 2000 years Bethlehem has served as a tourist centre. Above: A chain of gift shops in Manger Square. Below: Tourist items on display at one of the giftshops.

Menoras and Stars of David

Virtually every tourist shop in Bethlehem and Jerusalem carries many Jewish symbolic gifts. Bethlehem shopowners don't remember exactly how the menoras and Stars of David entered their shops, but ever since the Israeli occupation they have continued to reorder such items because of the great demand by visiting tourists for Jewish-related gifts. As justification one shopowner boasted that Israeli jewelers have also been featuring Christian items in their catalogues because of the constant demand for crosses and stars of Bethlehem.

Although the tourist business in Bethlehem brings benefits to a large sector of Palestinian society, many people question the continuous dependence by shopowners on items exported from Israel. The need to develop and enlarge the present local handicraft industry is of utmost importance. A number of research projects by local universities have been aimed at this goal but have not yet borne fruit. If the important source of income through tourists is not taken full advantage of by the local community then the benefits will be increasingly enjoyed by Israeli factories and businessmen.

This Christmas especially as thousands of Palestinian workers face job losses from Israeli factories and construction projects because of Israel's dire financial situation, a new direction must be sought. The need to nurture and enhance the local tourism industry would seem to be one of the main priorities of the Bethlehem community in particular and the Palestinian community in general.

Palestine and Culture

Movie Review:

Emotion Only "Beyond The Walls"

Isam (Mohammed Bakri) and his cellmates: *"A bittersweet taste of what life is really like for Palestinians truly committed to nationalist ideals."*

by Manar Said

This year's movie on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, *Beyond the Walls*, is exciting and politically challenging if you are Israeli or an ex-convict, as one viewer observed, and intriguing and aesthetically pleasing for those who do not fall into those two categories. Very much an Israeli production, it spends a great deal of time humanising a group of Palestinian political prisoners and their antagonists, Jewish criminal prisoners, all stuck in a maximum security prison in Israel. The film's premise is that all people, given enough time and good will, will discover they have more in common than what divides them. Although this certainly is not a new suggestion for solving the war still raging between Israel and Palestine, this film's approach — through the "undergrounds" of the two respective societies — puts a new twist on the well-worn equation of might versus right. But by dealing with the issues of Zionism, occupation and political struggle only at an abstract, symbolic level, it leads the audience to believe that good will alone can overcome institutionalised racism.

A Love Story in Disguise

Beyond the Walls, scripted by Benny Barabash and directed by his brother Uri, tells many peoples' stories. It shows the brutality with which Palestinian political prisoners are treated in Israeli jails by their interrogators and sometimes by the criminal prisoners. The political prisoners stick together and make decisions as a group. With the criminals, however, it's every man for himself — violence, humiliation and gang rape determine the pecking order. And then there are the prison authorities. Cynicals bastards, to say the least, they off their own drug dealer when he shows signs of breaking down and then blame it on the Arabs. Part of the film's power comes from the sheer shock of prison brutality on the nerves of the unsuspecting moviegoer, excluding of course the ex-cons, who are said to be attending the movie in record numbers.

The film portrays the slowly developing understanding, friendship and love between the two main leaders inside the prison — Isam, the leader of the Palestinian politicals, sentenced to two life sentences for "terrorist attacks," and Uri Mizrachi, leader of the Jewish criminals, in for armed robbery. The two leading roles are played with emotion and professionalism by Galilee actor Mohammed Bakri and Israeli Arnon Zadok. They start off the bitterest of enemies. After one gory fight where Uri and his cellmates try to set Isam's cell on fire during the night, Uri and Isam both end up in solitary confinement. They start talking to each other. Uri tells Isam he is a terrorist, asking rhetorically, "Blowing up buses is war?" Uri is stumped by Isam's reply: "Strafing refugee camps is war? That's like 1000 buses." Uri is stumped.

Many turns of the reels later, Isam and Uri decide to lead the prisoners in a hunger strike aimed at getting concessions from the prison authorities, including an investigation into deaths on their cellblock which they have finally realised the authorities are responsible for. Through his great charisma Uri marshalls his fellow prisoners into a compact unit. Isam inspires the respect of both Uri and his own men, managing to see the strike through. Isam's hour of reckoning comes at the very end of the movie when the prison authorities try to break the strike by offering him his freedom. He has to choose between his family, one the one hand, and his duty as a freedom fighter to remain steadfast against collaboration, on the other. His decision wins the hearts of the other prisoners and leaves the audience with a bittersweet taste of what life is really like for Palestinians truly committed to nationalist ideals. Of the many heroes in this movie, Isam is the one whose memory lingers in viewers' minds.

Pathos Without Commitment

An Israeli commentator observed that of all the movies about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, this was the most optimistic so far. But it does not offer any concrete suggestions on what we as an audience might do to help Isam and his compatriots inside Israeli jails. Director Uri Barabash explained in an interview with *Al Fajr* that for him, the movie was intended "above all to fight against prejudice." The message he wanted the audience to take home is very simple: "If love, brotherhood and companionship are possible in such a hell of a place, why not here and now?"

The genre chosen to convey this message of "mental freedom" from prejudice is the old-fashioned love story, with gut-level emotional appeal. Barabash credits the movie's success precisely with its clear *lack* of political concreteness, which he dismisses with disdain as "propaganda and rhetoric." He says, "If you want to make a film for 12 people, go ahead," but his film is intended to reach the masses. To speak to the masses he chose to "speak through the heart, and maybe the stomach, not through the head."

This is the main problem with this movie from a Palestinian perspective. It is able to capitalise on the pathos of the Palestinian tragedy without committing itself to any concrete solution. Because Israeli society is so far to the right, this movie appears to be "radical," even "revolutionary." But that is only an illusion.

A more positive element in the movie, from a Palestinian perspective, is its prison symbolism. For a Palestinian audience, the movie's conclusion, in which Arabs and Jews are joining to battle the corrupt authorities, seems to suggest the creation of a new and more just social order. Barabash himself denies that the brutal security officer and his kind in the film symbolise Zionism in general. Rather, he says, they represent the "fascist right wing" in Israeli society and that "only with their destruction is there hope for dialogue." Yet for some viewers the prison system will undoubtedly represent the whole Zionist establishment, only upon whose destruction will there be any hope for coexistence. Given such an interpretation, the movie's ending has very powerful political overtones indeed.

Ignorance or Deliberate Distortion?

The movie's strength is its sympathy for the Palestinian political prisoners. The self-restraint, dignity and discipline which characterise such political prisoners in Israeli jails is well portrayed. However, certain key aspects are blurred. For example, during a heated discussion among the Palestinians in Isam's cell, Walid exclaims with anger, "The only good Jew is a Jew who leaves Palestine." Isam answers Walid, "Your fanatics and their fanatics are just the same. You're not interested in human beings, just ideologies. And unfortunately, your kind are listened to."

This scene, practically the only one in which we see the Palestinian prisoners talking among themselves, reveals a severe lack of understanding of Palestinian politics which plagues the whole movie. Although the movie opens with a statement that it is "not based on real incidents or people," its brushes with reality are all the more confusing to the uninformed audience. When questioned, Barabash reveals that Isam is supposed to represent the "moderate" wing of Fatah, while Walid supposedly is espousing the line of the "rejectionist" left. In fact, no faction of the PLO officially espouses the racist doctrine of driving the Jews out of Palestine, no matter how "rejectionist." Furthermore, for any Palestinian to compare "their fanatics" — i.e. the extreme right-wing militants of Jewish nationalism — with "your fanatics" — in this case the left-wing factions of the PLO — is politically absurd. The leftists specifically reject racism of any kind and therefore cannot be considered even remotely similar. Rather, this brief encounter with political reality is an attack on ideology in all its forms, which Barabash has admitted he finds useless in winning hearts for peace.

The fine ending which the movie now has is owed to the persistence of the leading Palestinian actor — Mohammed Bakri — who took the script into his own hands to preserve the authenticity of his character, Isam. According to the Barabash script, Isam was supposed to accept the prison authorities' offer and leave the jail with his wife and son, humanity prevailing over his sense of duty, according to the Israeli scriptwriter's values. But Bakri told Barabash on the set that if he agreed to play this scene as written, "he wouldn't be able to look his neighbours in the eye anymore." No Palestinian political prisoner would abandon ship like that, he argued, especially a principled leader like Isam. Bakri and Barabash finally agreed to try it both ways, keeping the better take. As soon as they shot Bakri's version, everyone on the set at the time realised it was the only possible ending.

Box Office Success

Beyond the Walls is playing to packed audiences all over Israel. Before the film opened it was previewed in various Israeli towns, including Kiryat Shemona near the Lebanese border, and always enjoyed great popularity, according to Barabash. These special screenings included encounter sessions with the actors and audience discussions of their reactions, which Barabash says were "successful" because they allowed Arabs and Jews to talk out their feelings with each other. Barabash — a great believer in "dialogue" — is planning to continue with these movie/discussion sessions, the most recent being in Nazareth, at the invitation of Tawfiq Zayyad, and at the Knesset, where the film met with predictably mixed reactions.

Although it has yet to make it to the West Bank, Barabash promises the film is coming soon to Hakawati Theatre in East Jerusalem. One Hakawati actor, Edward Muallem, appears in the film. Barabash says he's not sure whether it will play in other West Bank cities. The film was recently bought for distribution by Warner Brothers and will be shown in Europe and the US. *Beyond the Walls* also won the "International Critic's Award" at the Venice Film Festival this year and has been selected by the Israeli Film Academy to represent Israel in the

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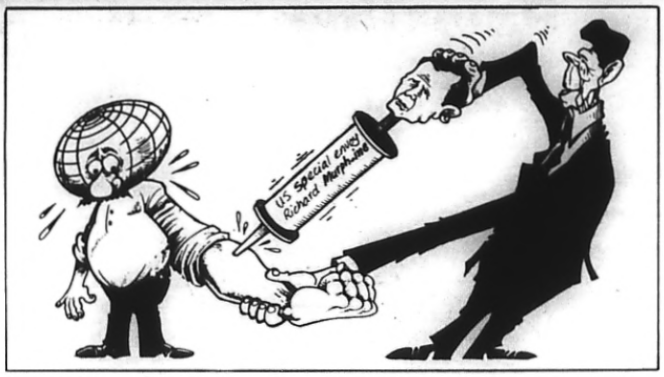
WINDOW ON THE ARAB PRESS



The escalation of fighting in Beirut and anti-occupation resistance in south Lebanon, various political statements of PLO officials and the confiscation of more West Bank land were the major stories in the local press this week.

The failure of the implementation of the security plan in Beirut and the Naqoura talks was evident by the continuation of sharp exchanges of fire and resistance attacks .

Statements by Salah Khalaf that the West Bank is not to be given over to Jordan and that relations with Egypt are conditional on Egypt's abandoning Camp David were given priority.

Confiscation of land in the Ramallah, Hebron and Bethlehem areas was a major item in all Palestinian dailies.

UN Affirms Political Rights

Once more the UN stresses the need of realising justice for the Palestinian people through return, self-determination and establishment of an independent state. And once more the world turns a deaf ear to these resolutions as it did to previous resolutions.

What is significant now is the stress that the Palestinian people, like the rest of the world, has the right to self-determination and to an independent state.

The Palestinian people's keenness on a just and dignified peace through an international conference stems from our people'e keenness on world peace.

The threat to the Middle East lies in the American imperialist designs to turn the area into a scene of hot confrontations. That is why the US opposed the UN resolutions yesterday.

AL SHA'AB
December 13

Arab Endorsement Needed

Jordan renewed its commitment to an international conference attended by all parties concerned. It seems that the Jordanian-Palestinian coordination has begun to bear fruit. Despite the difference on UN resolution 242, the Jordanian and Palestinian parties are about to reach a formula for joint action. This formula will be presented at the next Arab summit to secure Arab support. The main obstacle at this stage is the US-Israeli rejection of the international conference idea. We hope the Arab leaders won't pose another obstacle because this Arab obstacle would give the US and Israel the chance to avoid responsibility and blame the Arabs.

During the past few weeks, Jordan achieved a historic breakthrough when it returned Egypt to the Arab fold.

Jordan turned down Israel's call for bilateral negotiations. Now Jordan, the PLO and Egypt are working together. The Egyptian prime minister, Kamal Hassan Ali, stressed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to an independent state. He also stressed the necessity of PLO participation in an international peace conference.

The Arab leaders are requested to give this new move a chance to succeed.

AL QUDS
December 13

Need for Arab Solidarity

It was natural that the US and Israel reject the new UN resolution regarding the right of the Palestinian people to an independent state, through an international peace conference.

It was also natural that some European countries abstain from voting. But it was not natural for certain Arab countries to oppose this resolution, especially when such countries claim to be at the top of confrontation with Israel. Farouq Kaddoumi described the position of these Arab countries as "deplorable." And this is the minimum that could be said.

We realise that UN resolutions alone would do nothing. But still they are of great importance because they express an independent international will.

Should there be an Arab solidarity, this international will might have good chances to be implemented. Therefore we call for Arab solidarity.

AL FAJR
December 14

Unity is Strength

The Executive Committee elected by the PNC is preoccupied with restoring national unity and cohesion to the Palestinian legitimate institutions. In its first meetings, chaired by Arafat, the committee approved the formation of a committee for national dialogue with the Democratic Alliance factions.

The Democratic Alliance should, in return, show good will and abandon self-interest. National dialogue is all the more important during this crucial stage. Those who abstained from attending the PNC session are aware now of the gravity of the conspiracy against the PLO.

The PLO has great tasks ahead of it. It cannot perform its tasks as long as there is disorder in its ranks.

AL SHA'AB
December 15

The Palestinian Move

Following the failure of the attempts of those who tried to restrict the Palestinian move, the Palestinian leadership intensified its movements in all directions and at all levels.

Abu Ammar visited many Arab countries and Palestinian delegations visited African, Asian and European countries. The Executive Committee convened to discuss issues still pending because of the long delay between councils.

Abu Ammar warned that the expected international initiatives require full alertness. He stressed that political effort should be accompanied by military action.

The current Arab situation makes a just settlement probable. The international move would not be effective and just in the absence of a strong unified Arab position. Yet the Palestinian leadership would not allow an impasse, which is another form of death. So, the Palestinian leadership is moving in all directions, despite the effort of those who are trying to hinder the process.

AL FAJR
December 15

The European Initiative

There are signs of a new European initiative to solve the Middle East problem. This initiative coincides with the new features of the initiative that began to emerge in the Arab arena, especially after the convening of the 17th PNC session, which emphasised the unity of the PLO in the face of conflicting Arab alliances and the US and Israeli refusal of the idea of an international peace conference.

France leads the European initiative, which is in fact an extension of previous European initiatives that all failed because of the American position. France is doing its best to rally a comprehensive European stand as is evidenced by the European summit in Dublin.

The major point of this initiative is the amendment of resolution 242 to include mutual recognition between the PLO and Israel and recognition of the Palestinian right to a homeland and the illegality of occupying another people's land.

In this respect the European initiative meets with the Jordanian-Egyptian position.

But the PLO rejects this resolution in its entirety. It always insists on an international conference as the only means to solve the conflict. Would the European initiative support that conference? The next few days will be a test.

AL FAJR
December 17

The Initiative Market

Reports are talking about possible European and American initiatives. The latest is the French-Italian effort to formulate a new initiative to settle the conflict.

But such initiative should be connected with suitable circumstances in the area. And in view of the state of division in the Arab scene, there can be no just settlement.

We have not reached the minimum of Arab solidarity that would tip the balance in favour of the Arabs. There is no such thing in the Western political terminology as supporting rights and justice.

There is basic strategy. And there are basic interests of these European countries. Such interests are not exposed to any Arab threat. On the contrary, they are received warmly and with open arms in the Arab world. Arab impotence has given the US and Europe the excuse to neglect the most basic Arab and Palestinian rights.

The new initiatives should motivate the Arab nationalist forces to close ranks so as to abort any liquidation initiative.

AL SHA'AB
December 17

The Walking on the Rough Road

The current Israeli government faces problems that may lead to its collapse. Whether this government remains or not, the question is if it is able to shoulder the responsibility for peace while it is under the constant threat of collapse. If "Shas" movement withdraws, the government will lose its parliamentary majority.

It is worth noting that the recent Israeli government are not formed or dissolved on the basis of foreign issues but on the basis of differences in distributing portfolios.

The record of the present Israeli government, as far as the Palestinian cause is concerned, is only an extension of the record of previous governments. Moves for peace are still frozen, waiting for a daring and wise decision by an Israeli government that will have enough courage to go along this tough road.

AL QUDS
December 17

UNRWA Medical Care Curtailed

Life-saving treatment for 15 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon who suffer from chronic kidney failure will be stopped unless UNRWA can collect US$165,000 by New Year's eve, according to an UNRWA press release issued December 12. The sum of US$50,000 is needed to keep the 15 refugees alive until the end of March, 1985. If they receive further treatment after that, three haemodialysis machines at a cost of US$55,000 will be required, in addition to US$60,000 per year for maintenance, the press release said.

UNRWA's own emergency funds allocated for these purposes will expire on New Year's eve. These funds were used to treat the 15 kidney sufferers during the chaotic post-invasion period in Lebanon but were not sufficient to provide the expensive life-saving haemodialysis treatment.

Road Grid Plans

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which even the court regarded as "suspicious."

Ramallah lawyer Aziz Shehadeh, whose law firm filed many of the objections to the plan, called number 50 a "monstrous scheme." The only way to challenge the entire plan, he told the press conference at the American Colony Hotel, was to go to the World Court.

Agricultural expert and dairy farmer Amid Masri reported in detail on two 10-kilometre sections of road: from Tulkarm to Anabta and from Talluza to Ghor al-Fara' in the Jordan Valley. "Major socio-economic loss" will result from the destruction of a spring-fed irrigation system which pumps to 16,000 dunums. The road buries the water canal and underground pipes have been forbidden.

In the Anabta-Tulkarm area, the proposed road seems angled to cause the most damage possible to orchards and Nur Shams refugee camp.

Agro-economist Hisham Awartani of Najah University in Nablus said a "state of panic" had swept through the Anabta area when the extent of damage was made known. He charged that the road grid was carefully tailored 1) to neutralise land use along the road system; 2) to expropriate land as "public domain" whether the road (estimated to cost US$400 million) is built or not; and 3) to dismantle refugee camps.

An UNRWA official said the agency was unaware that the plan would affect the UNRWA-administered camps, but commented they had not yet seen a map of the pathways.

Hebron Hospital

continued from page 3

delegations to Saudia Arabia, Kuwait and the Gulf States to solicit JD4 to 6 million. High-ranking medical personnel who will head departments, or act as directors and consultants will be sent to the US and European countries for further specialised training.

The hospital is to be built and fully equipped within a three-year period according to the charitable society. A four-story main building will be constructed on a 29-dunum land plot in the Farsh Hawa region at the north-west entrance of Hebron. The main building, the pharmacy, stores and other service buildings will occupy a 27,000 square metre space.

Dr Mahmoud Tamimi, the PFS deputy chairman, told *Al Fajr* the hospital will offer jobs to more than 650 people. Tamimi said it is a very important project for both medical and economic reasons. Southern West Bank residents will be able to use this hospital instead of the Israeli Hadassa Hospital in Jerusalem.

Two weeks ago Israeli authorities also approved the construction of a centre for specialised medical care in Ramallah. The approval was given in the name of the Medical Care Society. Issa Salti, the Society's chairman, said that bulldozers would soon start digging a foundation.

West Bank development experts commented that the military government's emphasis is on approving service-related projects instead of development projects which relieves the military government's budget for other uses.

The Patients Friends Society was founded in Hebron in 1976 and carries out a number of social and health community projects.

PALESTINIAN FOLKLORE AT BETHLEHEM UNIVERSITY

A Palestinian folklore exhibition and festival will be held at Bethlehem University on Friday December 21. It will continue for 3 days.

SCHEDULE OF CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS FOR CATHOLIC, LATIN AND PROTESTANT DENOMINATONS, DECEMBER 24, 1984

12:45 pm. His Beatitude arrives at the Mar Elias Monastery and greets the people. 5 mounted policemen join the procession.
1:00 pm. His Beatitude's procession arrives at Rachel's Tomb. His Beatitude gets out of the car and greets the people, including the Deputy Mayor of Bethlehem, The Mayor of Beit Sahur and The Mayor of Beit Jala.
1:30 pm. His Beatitude's Procession arrives at Manger Square. His Beatitude is received by the Governor, the chief of Police, the Mayor, members of the municipal council and other notables, who accompany him to the entrance of the Church and then take their leave.
3:30 pm. Latin Services leaving the Church of St. Catherine to the Grotto.
4:10 pm. Protestant Service at Shepherd's Field — YMCA, Beit Sahur.
4:45-12 pm. An open house of Christmas carols at the Bethlehem Bible College, Beit Shaour Rd. (English and Arabic).
5:00 pm. The Lutheran Church — Service in German and English.
7:00 pm. Greek Catholic Service at Shepherd's Field.
7:15 pm. The Lutheran Church — Service in German.
8:30 pm. — 11:30 pm. Concert of Choirs in Manger Square.
9:00 pm. Anglican Service in the courtyard of the Greek Monastery.
11:30 pm. Service in the Baptist Church.
Midnight: Carmel Church Service in French.
Midnight: Midnight Mass at the Church of St. Catherine.

At the Nuzha/Hakawati Theatre: Tel 288189, 280957 Jerusalem.

* *Theatre:* El-Hakawati presents Ali the Galilean (Arabic with English translations) December 22, 28, 29 at 7:00 pm.

* *Music:* Al-Manar presents an evening of national songs December 25, 26.

* *Film:* The Autumn of War (Russian with Arabic subtitles).

* *Poetry:* Samih al-Qassem presents poetry reading accompanied by a group of actors and musicians.

Issawiyeh Land

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planning to use the land to expand the hospital.

Two families own the land: Hamdan Mustafa, and three sons of Ali Mohammed — Ahmad, Mohammed and Hassan. They claim to have land ownership deeds in their names from the British mandate government. The landowners are reportedly searching in the *Tabu* registration department in Jerusalem for the documents.

Village residents say the landplot is a flat fertile stretch extending from the slope of the French Hill settlement and Hadassah hospital. Until last year, despite the fencing of the landplot by hospital employees, Palestinian landowners continued to cultivate wheat and barley on their land. Some villagers were also using a footpath in the middle of the land to cut across from Jerusalem to the village.

Issawiyeh village, which has a population of about 5000 residents, was stripped of its traditional agricultural land by successive confiscations for Israeli settlements, which completely surround the village. Village residents say that the confiscations began shortly after the occupation of the West Bank in 1967 and have not stopped. The village's land was used to build the French Hill settlement in 1969, Ma'aleh Adumim in 1974, and the Hebrew University and Hadassah hospital. Most recently, the Israeli authorities confiscated 5000 dunums of Issawiya land to build the new Jerusalem-Ma'aleh Adunim highway, connecting West Jerusalem to the West Bank city-settlement and bypassing Arab population areas. The work was completed in 1983.

In Defence of Roots

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obliteration intentions. And if this is not possible it creates 'Moslem *Qadis*' or 'trustees' and treats them as rubber stamps."

A Call For Struggle

Accompanying the overall tone of anger in the book, is the reiterated call to the Palestinian Moslems, to be ever alert and united in their struggle for the return of Islamic *waqf* property. Fourani's own experience has tought him that when the community is silent and indifferent towards the schemes being weaved against the *waqf* and the Moslems, those holy places which remain and *waqf* will be at stake too. In his conclusion he puts forward a set of demands which he believes the Palestinian community must struggle for:

1. The liberation of all waqf property which was confiscated according to the Absentee Property law (1950). Waqf property cannot be bought or sold, since it is the property of God and Moslems who constitute 70 percent of the Palestinian community in Israel. The confiscation of the *waqf* on the declaration that its owners are "absent" constitutes a gross violation and infringement on the Islamic Shari'a law and a gross interference in the Moslems' internal affairs.

2. The transfer of the waqf to democratically elected committees which would represent the real interests of the Moslems. This means the abolishment of the trustee committees appointed by the Israeli authorities, to serve as a legitimising "Islamic cover" on the secret deals which have been devouring the *waqf*.

3. The consideration of all the deals which were carried out affecting the waqf property and mosques to be null and void. This would include deals such as those relating to Hassan Beq Mosque in Jaffa, the Saghir and Greeneh mosques and many others, which were carried out without the knowledge of the Moslem community and in contravention of Islamic laws.

4. Compensation to the Moslems for the waqf property which was secretly grabbed, by allocating equal property from state land.

WEEKLY REVIEW

December 12, 1984

UNIVERSITY STUDENT RELEASED

HEBRON — Israeli authorities released Samir Daoud al-Manasreh of Bani Na'im near Hebron after he completed a 15-month jail sentence on security charges.

Manasreh was detained upon his return from the Soviet Union, where he was attending university.

detainees who briefed them on conditions in the prison.

THIEVES IN RAMALLAH

RAMALLAH — Unidentified persons broke into several shops in Ramallah, including the shop of Ibrahim al-Far, head of the local Chamber of Commerce.

RAMALLAH YOUTHS JAILED

RAMALLAH — An Israeli mili-

petrol bombs at an Israeli army vehicle.

3 YEARS FOR MOLOTOV

NABLUS — An Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Ayman Razeh of Nablus to three years in prison and three years suspended on charges of throwing a molotov cocktail at an Israeli army vehicle.

JENIN YOUTH JAILED, FINED

JENIN — Farid Id Damj of Jenin was sentenced by military court in Nablus to 67 days in prison and a IS30,000 fine on charges of demonstrating 4 months ago.

in prison and 2 years suspended on charges of membership in an illegal organisation.

2 GAZA YOUTHS JAILED

GAZA — Gaza military court sentenced Riyad Nathmi Hussein Abu Suttan, 21, of Jabalya camp to 30 months in prison and six months suspended on charges of membership in Palestinian organisation and hurling a bomb at an Israeli patrol.

The court also sentenced Musa Muhammed Ragheb, 25, to 25 days in prison and a IS400,000 fine on charges of contacting Palestinian organisations while he was studying in the Soviet Union.

ISRAELI BUS STONED NEAR AL-AMARI

RAMALLAH — An Israeli bus

Jamal Dardouneh, 21, of Jabalya camp was convicted of membership in an illegal organisation. He received a sentence of one year in prison and a one year suspended sentence.

Khaled Dardouneh, 22, of Jabalya camp was convicted of membership in an illegal organisation and handing out leaflets. He was sentenced to one year in prison and one year suspended.

Mohammed Hashem Hamdouneh Dardouneh, 22, of Jabalya was convicted of membership, recruiting others, planning to kidnap and kill an Israeli soldier and to seize his weapon. He was sentenced to 2 years in prison.

Azmi Ahmad Yousef Asaliyeh of Jabalya was found guilty of membership and distributing leaflets. He was sentenced to one year in prison and one year suspended.

Musa Muhamed Ragheb,

TEL AVIV — Israeli authorities arrested 98 Arabs following a hand grenade attack on an Israeli bus in Tel Aviv December 17, 1984.

ENGINEER JAILED

RAMALLAH — Ramallah engineer Adib Ibrahim Ahmad Suleiman was sentenced by the military court to six months in prison and one-a-half years suspended on charges of membership in an illegal organisation.

JALAZOUN YOUTH SENTENCED AND FINED

NABLUS — An Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Khaled Musa Ar-Riyahi to two months in jail and a IS30,000 fine for throwing stones at Israeli patrols.

December 13, 1984

MKs VISIT FARA'A PRISON

JENIN — The two Knesset members of the Progressive List For Peace visited Fara'a prison to check on the conditions of the detainees following reports in the press of torture in the prison.

Matti Peled and Mohammed Mi'ari met with Israeli officials and a numebr of

tary court in Ramallah sentenced Jihad Id al-Na'san of Ramallah to two years in prison and two years suspended on charges of setting fire to telephone lines and making a rifle.

The court also sentenced Adib Ibrahim Zaid of Ramallah to three years' imprisonment on charges of membership in an illegal organisation and receiving weapons training while at university in Baghdad.

ARAB BUS ASSAULTED

BEITUNIA — An Arab bus belonging to the Beitunia Bus Company was attacked with stones. The front window of the bus was smashed.

A groub of Beitunia residents chased away the attackers. This is the second time a bus from the company is attacked.

9 YEARS FOR MOLOTOV

NABLUS — An Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Ibrahim Sweidan of Tulkarm to nine years in prison and three years suspended on charges of throwing

December 16, 1984

ISRAEL STOPS GAZA MEDICAL AID

GAZA — Israel has refused to allow Egyptian medical aid worth US$30,000 to reach the Palestinian Red Crescent (PRC) in the Gaza Strip, an Egyptian foreign Ministry official announced.

Tuha Farnawan, director of the Palestinian Department in the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, said Israel did not explain its reasons.

PRISONERS DONATE TO ETHIOPIA

Palestinian political detainees at Shatta prison donated IS50,000 to be forwarded to famine-struck Ethiopia.

HEBRON YOUTH JAILED FOR MEMBERSHIP

HEBRON — Shaher Ali Al-Kadi of Hebron was sentenced by the Israeli military court to one year

was pelted with stones as it was passing through al-Amari camp near Ramallah. They added that the bus's windshield was smashed, but there were no injuries. Elsewhere, Israeli settlers earlier set an Arab-owned tractor on fire in Bethlehem.

December 17, 1984

BEIT FAJAR LAND CONFISCATED

BETHLEHEM — Israeli authorities have notified a number of residents of Beit Fajar village in the Bethlehem district of their decision to confiscate 700 dunums from the village's land.

GAZANS JAILED ON MILITARY CHARGES

GAZA — Six young men from the Gaza Strip were sentenced by the Israeli military court:

Riyadh Nathmi Hassan Abu Sultan, 22, was sentenced to 3 months in prison and one year suspended on charges of membership in an illegal organisation and throwing two bombs at an Israeli patrol.

25, of Gaza was found guilty of contacting PLO men during his stay in the Soviet Union where he was studying. He was sentenced to 25 days in prison and a IS400,000 fine.

BZU STUDENT JAILED

NABLUS — A Bir Zeit University student was sentenced by the Nablus military court to 18 months in prison and 18 months suspended on security charges.

Imad Atari was charged with membership in an illegal oranisation and training with weapons.

The court also sentenced Mohammed Jarar of Nablus to six months in prison and four months suspended on charges of membership.

COURT POSTPONED HEARING NAJAR CASE

NABLUS — Israeli military court in Nablus postponed hearing the case of detainee Basmeh Najar, sister of the martyr Bilal Najar, on a charge of membership in a Palestinian organisation.

Israeli authorities had also detained her second brother,

Nidal, and their cousins, Mustafa and Najah Najar, on similar charges.

NO WATER IN CAMPS

NABLUS — Water supplies to Balata and Askar refugee camps in the Nablus district were cut for five days. Residents called on the officials to resume water supplies to the camps.

JENIN LAWYER JAILED

JENIN — Advocate Ghassan Mohammed Jarar of Jenin was sentenced by the military court in Nablus to three years in prison and three years suspended on charges of membership in an illegal organisation and weapons training.

YOUTHS SENTENCED FOR MOLOTOV

NABLUS — Nablus military court sentenced Imad Ibrahim Amer, Mohammed Najib and Abdel Hakim al-Hariri to three-and-a-half years in prison, Mutasem Mohammed Amer to two-and-a-half years in prison and Zuhair Massad Ahmad to two years in prison.

The four, who are all from Jenin camp, were charged with throwing Molotov cocktails.

16 JABALYA FAMILIES EVICTED

JABALYA — Israeli military authorities notified 16 families from Jabalya refugee camp in the Gaza district that they will have to evict their homes so that they can be demolished. The families have said they refuse to leave the camp and live in any other place "no matter what the circumstances."

YOUTH GETS 7 YEARS FOR BOMBS

NABLUS — Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Ibrahim Muhammed Sweidat to 7 years in prison and 3 years suspended on charges of preparing 19 molotov cocktails, recruiting other youths and throwing bombs at Israeli army vehicles.

HEBRON STUDENT FINED

GAZA — The military court in Gaza fined student Abdel Hadi Zakariyah Marakah of Hebron IS20,000 on charges of possessing illegal leaflets. Marakah is a student at the Polytechnic and a former member of the student council.

AL-BIREH YOUTH JAILED, FINED

AL-BIREH — Hashem Nawar of al-Bireh was sentenced by military court in Ramallah to one month in jail, six months suspended, and a IS100,000 fine on charges of throwing stones at Israeli vehicles.

The Hotel Workers Union held a bazaar for its members this week in Jerusalem. /AO

5 JENIN YOUTHS JAILED

JENIN — Four youths from the village of Takuah in the Jenin district were sentenced by the military court to various prison terms on charges of membership in illegal organisations and transferring weapons from Jenin to Qalqiliya.

Mahmoud Hassan Abu Salameh was sentenced to seven years in prison; Huitham Saleh Abu Majed to five years in prison; Saleh Mahamed Abu Salameh to three years in prison and Rahaifha Abdel Rahman Abu Salameh to three-and-a-half years in prison.

NABLUS YOUTHS SENTENCED

NABLUS — The Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Imad Muhamed Daoud, 15, of Dheisheh camp to four months in prison and six months suspended on charges of demonstrating last October.

The court also sentenced Ali Atta al-Arouri, 15, and Muhamed Khamis Abu Arjaileh, 16, of Atarah near Ramallah to two months in prison, four months suspended and a IS35,000 fine on charges of taking part in a demonstration in Bir Zeit.

Military Orders

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Although section 64 of the fourth Geneva Convention did allow the occupying force to legislate for security reasons, advocate Muna Rishmawi points out that legislation should specify its terms in the clearest way possible. Order No. 1079 allows virtually any action or printed material to be considered incitement or illegal propaganda.

Nos. 1084, 1094, 1098, 1106 — Orders concerning amendments to Income Tax laws — 1984.

These orders constitute the twenty fourth through twenty-sixth amendments to a 1964 Jordanian law concerning levying of taxes in the West Bank. Military order 1084 orders tax figures to be rounded to the nearest shekel; Nos. 1094 and 1098 adjust tax payments to the rate of Israeli inflation and currency devaluation; No. 1106 empowers the head of the civil administration to make changes in the income tax law, thus replacing the area commander. (West Bank residents and business owners pay income tax to the Israeli government but do not enjoy the same rights of social welfare and compensation Israeli taxpayers do.)

No. 1091 — "Order concerning government property" — 1984.

This order amends order No. 59 dated 1967. The previous definition of government property is replaced by the following:

(1) Property which at the time of occupation and after was registered or belonged to any of the following: (a) an enemy country (b) an organisation or a company that relates to an enemy country — directly or indirectly; controlled or uncontrolled by the enemy country.

(2) Land that was expropriated by the Israeli defence forces based on all laws or security laws for public needs, be it for a non-local authority or for a local committee for development and planning.

(3) Property whose owner had requested a responsible authority to manage it and the authority had agreed.

International law did in fact provide for the expropriation of land in occupied territories but only in limited circumstances (ie, for a limited period of time, and if expropriation would not affect ownership rights.) The general practice of Israeli authorities has been to expropriate West Bank land and lease it to settlement agencies such as the Jewish agency. The 130 settlements built on hundreds of thousands of expropriated land are clear examples of violations of international law.

Order No. 1091 added another section to order No. 59 stating that "all operations concerning government property carried out by the responsible authority before the issuance of this order as defined by sections 2 and 3 are considered in effect."

No. 1108 — "Order concerning punishment" — 1984.

This order amends military order No. 378 dated 1970 which set prison sentences for breaking military orders. It starts by adding the phrase, "Whoever throws something — including a stone" to a section entitled *Throwing an Object*. It proceeds to specify degrees of punishment according to the manner in which the object is thrown and its intended target:

[If the object is thrown...]

(1) in a manner that hits or can possibly hit a moving vehicle, punishment is 10 years' imprisonment;

(2) towards a person or property with the intention of hurting the person or damaging the property — 10 years;

(3) towards a transport vehicle with the intention of hitting it or its passengers — 10 years.

The official Hebrew version sets the punishment at 20 years. It should be noted here that the first of the above offences does not necessitate premeditated intent on the part of the accused.

Issuing military orders and altering pre-existing laws result in injustice and clear violations of international law. Most orders cannot be justified as serving any security purposes or enhancing the welfare of the occupied. On the contrary, military orders deprive Palestinians in the West Bank of many basic human rights.

Beyond the Walls

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Academy (Oscar) Awards next year.

Even settler fanatic Meir Kahane helped to publicise the movie when he demonstrated against it at Jerusalem and Tel Aviv cinemas. In Jerusalem 3000 people assembled for a counter protest against Kahane, driving him away with tomatoes and chants. Uri Barabash says he has been called an "Ashafist" (literally pro-PLO in Hebrew) in the Hebrew press for his sympathetic portrayal of Palestinian political prisoners. On the other hand, many Palestinians also criticise the film for not being realistic enough. They say treatment of Palestinians in Israeli jails is really much worse. They also observe that the film completely avoids any mention of real political parties or groups and simply sticks to emotions.

The film was made with the help of a US$100,000 grant from the "Israeli Fund for the Promotion of Quality Films," part of the Ministry of Education's budget. Barabash says the film passed censorship without any changes or cuts and the crew had extensive cooperation from Israeli prison authorities, who let them visit Ramleh jail to do background research for six months prior to filming as well as permitting some scenes to be shot in an old prison. However, Mohammed Bakri was refused permission to visit Ramleh prison. In addition, Israeli sources note that Israeli political prisoner Udi Adiv — known for his principled decision to serve his sentence with the Palestinian political prisoners for the last 12 years— was transferred out of Ramleh prison during those six months so that none of the crew could have contact with him. Rami Halevni, another Israeli who also served a four-year prison term in Ramleh prison with Adiv on political charges, was very helpful in advising about details of prison life for the set, says Barabash, as were a number of other former Jewish criminal and Palestinian prisoners, many of whom actually acted the minor roles in the movie.

Filming was accomplished in one month and all technicians used, except for the Palestinian set designer (from Beach Camp, Gaza Strip), were Israelis from Israeli filming companies. The only woman's role of significance is an Israeli actress portraying an Arab woman. According to one of the Palestinian actors, while professional actors were hired for the main Jewish roles, most of the Palestinian actors (with a few notable exceptions) were undertrained — some of them even scouted out by Barabash on the streets of Tel Aviv — and underpaid. Most of the scenes shot of the Palestinian prisoners in their cells were later cut during editing. This left the Palestinian characters flat, underdeveloped and, unfortunately, misunderstood. The actor commented, "He (Barabash) could have brought Israelis to play the Palestinian roles. Instead he said he wanted the Palestinians to speak for themselves. But then he didn't let us; he cut all our scenes."

Military Order is the Rule

The recent crop of Israeli military-issued orders affecting life for Palestinians on the West Bank are surveyed by **Baher Ashhab**, who explains the general legal – and illegal – basis of Israeli occupation.

Israeli military authorities use of an ever-expanding collection of Israeli military orders to forge their rule over the West Bank for the past 17 years contradicts international law concerning actions of a belligerent occupier in an occupied territory. These orders, totalling 1121 to date, began immediately following the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the ceasefire between Israel and Jordan in June, 1967. They have in effect empowered the Israeli military government in the West Bank (itself established through Military Order No. 2) with all legislative, executive and administrative power over the West Bank that was previously wielded by the Jordanian government. Most Jordanian laws and regulations in effect before Israeli occupation have by now been altered beyond recognition or totally replaced by these military orders – changes condemnable under international law.

The military authorities utilised the same process of altering pre-existing laws in the Gaza Strip. Under Egyptian control from 1948-1967, Gaza was administered using the 1945 British Mandate Emergency Defence Laws, to which the Egyptians made minor alterations. The final drafts of military orders for Gaza are similar in content and effect to the West Bank's.

Article 64 of the fourth Geneva Convention states: "The panel laws of the occupied territory shall remain in force with the exception that they may be repealed or suspended by the occupying power in cases when they constitute a threat to its security or an obstacle to the application of the present convention." A review of several of the 1121 orders issued since June, 1967, reveals contradictions with the convention ruling. In fact, several orders prove to be outright violations. Although the terms "threat" and "security" are broad, hundreds of military orders do not even come close to the broadest definition of these terms.

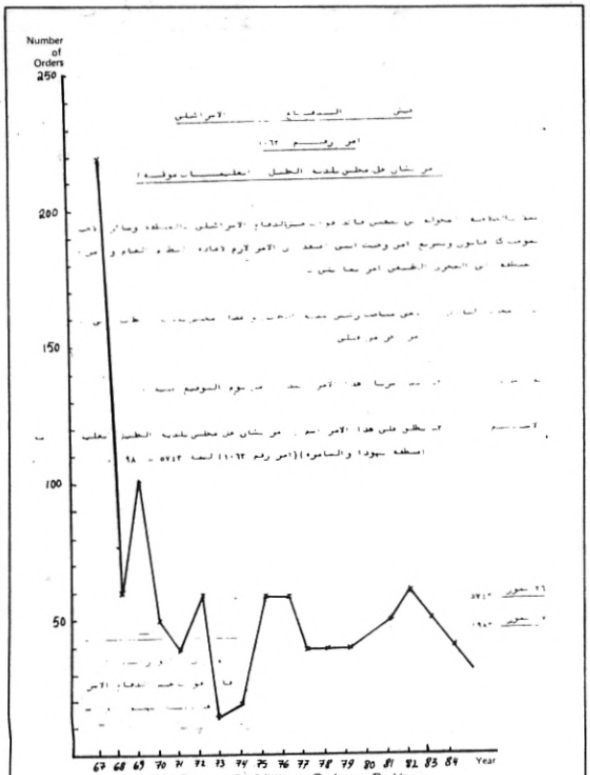
Clear examples are military order No. 1103 on licencing in the cosmetic industry, No. 663 on work injuries which alters Jordanian labour laws, No. 501 which levies taxes on education, and several others.

Fearing an international outcry because of their defiant alterations of prevailing West Bank laws, Israeli officials at first prefaced their military orders with statements explaining why they thought their law amendments fell into the categories of "threat" or "security of the state of Israel." Later, polite explanations were bluntly replaced with "By the powers invested in me as the commander of the Israeli Defence Forces in the area I order as follows..."

The first military order issued after the 1967 war ended declared that the Israeli army assumed control over the West Bank.

The second followed immediately and seemingly complied with the Geneva conventions. Section 2 of the order stated that "all laws which were in force in the area on June 7, 1967, shall continue to be in force as long as they do not contradict this or any other proclamation or order made by the West Bank area commander, or conflict with the changes arising by virtue of the occupation by the Israeli Defence Forces of the area."

Section 3 of the same order, however, states: "Every governmental, legislative and administrative power in respect of the region or its inhabitants shall henceforth be vested in me (area commander) alone, and shall only be exercised by me or by persons appointed by me for that purpose or acting on my behalf." Thus Israeli authorities accepted the application of the Geneva conventions but simultaneously defied their rulings. Israel accepted the title "belligerent occupier," then proceeded to designate itself "administrator."



Ups And Downs Of Military Orders, By Year

Graph: The number of military orders issued per year has never passed the '67 record but they still show no sign of abating. Background: Arabic text of Military Order 1063, banning the Hebron municipal council, June 7, 1983.

Statements made by various Israeli officials prove that Israel no longer considers itself a belligerent occupier of the West Bank, in contrast to the view held by most of the world community. Gabriel Bach, state attorney of Israel in 1980, said that since the Jordan's annexation of the West Bank in 1950 was only recognised by Great Britian and Pakistan, the question of sovereignty over the area is undecided. Therefore Israel views itself as benevolent administrator of the territory and not as military occupier. With sovereignty unclear, says Israel, international laws do not apply to the West Bank. The result has been that the West Bank military government has legislated matters ranging from prison sentences to education, health, economy and land ownership, in effect acting as a sovereign government.

In their study "The West Bank and the Rule of Law," advocates Raja Shehadeh and Jonathan Kuttab argue that Israel accrues important benefits by acting as administrator. Among these advantages are that the area can be treated as a part of the state of Israel without actually being annexed. This includes expropriating Arab land and building Jewish settlements, levying taxes and controlling all aspects of the area's economy, using the area as a market for Israeli products, controlling the area's water and mineral sources, etc...

If Israel officially annexed the West Bank, it would have to absorb a million new Palestinian citizens. West Bank Palestinians would thereby acquire some clout to demand political and legal rights denied to them under occupation. But by preserving its current basis of colonial rule, Israel can argue in the international arena that it is applying Jordanian law in the area as required by international law. Not mentioned, however, is that these laws are severely altered through the issuance of military orders, and that West Bank residents receive neither the protection international law grants to populations under occupation nor the rights that would be due them as legal citizens of Israel.

Military orders are issued at an average rate of 50 per year. They are published in Hebrew and Arabic by the area commander of the West Bank. The Hebrew version is the official one in Israeli law. The Arabic version is a rough translation of the original and, according to Ramallah advocate Muna Rishmawi, it often contains linguistic and typographical errors that can mislead local advocates and their clients. Military Order No. 1108 issued in 1983, for example, sets the penalty for a throwing stones at 10 years in the Arabic version and 20 years in the Hebrew version.

The orders are distributed to lawyers and to persons concerned with the order issued, but often several months after the date of issue.

Most West Bank residents remain oblivious to the laws that govern them. Fortunately Law in the Service of Man, a local affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists, has in the past several years published documentation and analysis of many military orders in English and Arabic and has made them available to the public for nominal fees.

Recent military orders include:

No. 1060 – "Order concerning law on registration of immovable property" – 1983.

This order gives jurisdiction to a committee composed of Israeli military officials to hear, accept or reject all requests and appeals by local residents to register land in the West Bank. A similar committee was established by the Jordanian government before 1967 but it only managed to register 40 percent of West Bank land. All registration was halted in 1969 by military order No. 291, and Jordanian law was amended so that a military committee was established to hear appeals concerning land claims. Military order No. 1060 granted more authority to the military committee in a manner that prevents its decisions from being challenged.

The order also prohibits local courts from having jurisdiction over land registrations. All claims must be referred to the military committee. According to an LSM newsletter dated September 1984, this could facilitate fraudulent land sales to Israeli companies and individuals for construction of settlements.

No. 1064 – "Order concerning the appointment of a responsible authority to the Hebron municipality" – 1984.

This order was preceded by order 1063 which in effect dissolved the elected municipality of Hebron headed by acting mayor Mustafa Natsheh. No. 1064 transferred all the powers held by the mayor to a responsible authority. This authority is defined as "whoever is appointed by *me*" (the head of the Civil Administration, himself appointed through M.O. 947 in 1980). Zamir Shemesh, an Israeli citizen, was appointed as the responsible authority for the Hebron municipality.

No. 1079 – "Order concerning incitement and anti-state propaganda" – 1984.

This order amends order No. 101 dated 1967 and prefaced with a statement declaring that its issuance was based on security reasons. The original order had specified what was considered incitement or illegal propaganda and which actions were prohibited, including "anti-Israel-Zionist" literature, nationalist music and art, and anti-occupation pamphlets.

Military order No. 1079 broadens the scope of prohibited activities, adding more general terms and definitions. For example, the words "noises and ringing," along with recording, tapes and cinematic photography are all added to the definition of printing. To the definition of distributing are added: tapes, cassettes, and records. And to the definition of publishing are added: written, oral, printed, with a voice, by showing films, or any other way.

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